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THE CHURCH,
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The gist of Dr. C.F.W. Walther's classics:

Kirche und Amt and Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen
Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ortsgemeinde, offered in English and applied
to present-day conditions

by

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We cannot think of a more appropriate way of introducing the monograph which is herewith offered to the Christian reader than by presenting a few excerpts from the foreword of Dr. C. F. W. Walther to the first edition of his classic Kirche und Amt, issued in the year 1852. He writes:

"The doctrines of the Church and the ministry have become a question which at the present time divides the Lutherans into two camps. Between the very ones who enjoy the reputation of being the most faithful defenders of the truth entrusted to our Church a considerable difference with respect to those doctrines has become evident. Not only has the impression been created, but it has already openly been stated that the doctrine of our Evangelical Lutheran Church is still undeveloped and obscure with regard to those articles, and therefore is in need not only of a further development and completion, but itself required clarification and correction, and that in the present controversy of the Lutherans concerning the points mentioned there is clear evidence of the fact that the time has now come in which also these points are to be clarified within our Church and to be brought into their correct relation to the entire structure of doctrine.

"We, as the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States find ourselves unable to share this last conviction. On the contrary we are firmly convinced: The present division of the Lutherans concerning the important doctrines of the Church and the ministry and whatever is immediately connected with them is due to the fact that there has been a neglect of and a deviation from the doctrine as set forth in the public confessions and in the private writings of the orthodox teachers of our Church. We also have the firm conviction: Neither has our Church neglected to discuss the doctrines of the Church and the ministry, so that they still look forward to a development, nor has she--and that with a much smaller degree of plausibility--darkened

the doctrines and polity of the Church. It was our intention to give
a full and complete discussion of the doctrines of the Church, so that it would be necessary to cast light upon
them and to straighten them out now. We also hold this firm conviction.
It was just that great and decisive battle of the Reformation which our
Church waged against the papacy in the sixteenth century that concerns
the doctrines of the Church and the ministry, as they have now once
more been called into question, and the pure, clear doctrine on these
points is a precious booty which our Church has gained from that battle.

"It could, of course, not have been our intention to offer a complete
discussion of the doctrine of our Church and the ministry... We
were merely concerned about emphasizing those points regarding which
a difference has become apparent, and therefore to include only so many
items not in controversy as were necessary for the sake of the connection.
We therefore hope that we shall not be accused of onesidedness in con-
ception and presentation on account of this intended incompleteness. In
order to avert misunderstandings we expressly remark that this treatise
is not concerned primarily with the actual application of any church
polity, but rather with the essence of the Church and with the principles
according to which the outward appearances are to be judged and upon
which the church polity should rest.

"The form of theses was chosen in this monograph in order to pre-
sent to our readers the main points upon which our discussion depends,
in short and definite words. Although the proof from the Word of God,
as immediately connected with the propositions, contains only suggestions
which are further expanded in the added testimonies, we were yet of the
opinion that these few suggestions could not well be omitted...

"May this treatise do its share in causing the treasures of wis-
dom and understanding, which are now lying buried in the dust-covered
tomes of our pious and learned fathers, to be brought back to light
and used. This would be a gain of unspeakable worth for our Church.

But we, to whom God through the grace of His precious Spirit, has all His unfathomable mercy given the understanding of the pure doctrine of His holy Word, also with the aid and the service of those faithful servants of God who are now beholding what they here believed, pray Him that He would keep and strengthen us in His truth against all blinding wisdom and deception of men, and to Him we give thanks, honor, praise, and glory through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior."

To these statements we add a few paragraphs from the monograph of the late Doctor F.V.N.Painter. "Luther on Education." He writes:

"As we have seen, the Reformers taught that by faith we have immediate access to God. Needing the intervention of no special sacerdotal class, such as existed under the papacy or the Jewish dispensation, all Christians have now the privileges that once pertained to the hierarchical office. They approach trustfully into the presence of God; they offer Him the incense of praise and thanksgiving; they intercede for themselves and all mankind. In his treatise 'On Christian Liberty' Luther presents this truth very forcibly: 'Nor are we only kings and the freest of all men, but also priests forever, a dignity far higher than kingship, because by that priesthood we are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God. For these are the duties of priests, and they cannot possibly be permitted to any unbeliever. Christ has obtained for us this favor, if we believe in Him, that, just as we are His brethren and co-heirs and fellow-kings with Him, so we should also be fellow-priests with Him and venture with confidence, through the spirit of faith, to come into the presence of God and cry Abba, Father! and to pray for one another and to do all things which we see done and figured in the visible and corporal office of priesthood.'

"This doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers bestows upon them great honor. At one blow it breaks the bondage of the laity

11
as it exists under the gospel. They are bound in their religious life by no external human authority. They are freemen in Christ. In this independent position, life is dignified by the weight of grave responsibilities. Every one must watch over his own religious faith and practice. While giving due honor to their religious teachers, Christians are not bound to an unquestioning submission, but test all instruction by the Word of God." (Pp.59-61.)

With these few thoughts to guide the reader, may this treatise go forth with the blessing of Him who Himself is the Truth and who alone is able to guide us into all truth.

The Author.

1. Of the Church in the True or Primary Sense of the Term.

The Church, in the first, real, proper, or primary sense of the term, is the sum total of all those who, by faith in the Triune God, specifically in Jesus Christ as the vicarious Substitute and Redeemer of all mankind, have become members in the body of Jesus Christ, as the one Head of the Church. Membership in this invisible Church is a condition of salvation, for it is the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Eph.1,22,23. And (God) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

If Christ, according to this passage, is the Head of the ekklesia or Church, and if the latter is His body, then the Church in the true sense of the word is the sum total of all those who are united with Christ, as the members of the body are connected and united with their head.

Eph.5,23-27. The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Here the fact of the vicarious redemption, as a result of which sanctification and glory is given to the Church, is made the basis of the relation between Christ and His Church. The Church consists of those who have received the redemption, the vicarious atonement of Christ.

Rom.12,5. We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Here it is again stated that the believers are one body in Christ, united with Him, as their Head, by faith.

1 Cor.12,27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Col.1,18. And He (Christ) is the Head of the body, the Church.

See also Eph.4,15,16 and Col.2,19 for statements concerning Christ as the Head, and the Church as the body, and Gal.3,28 for the unity of the believers in Christ.

1 Cor.3,16,17. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

The temple of God is considered as one large building, the believers being the sum total of those comprising the temple, holy through the imputation of Christ's merits.

Eph.2,19-22. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ

Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Here the picture is that of a spiritual temple, whose unity is preserved by the one Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, in and through whom the entire building is holy. This habitation of God comprises all those who have received the reconciliation to God by faith, through the work of the Spirit.

John 11,51,52. Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

It is here plainly stated that the children of God from all nations are to be gathered together in one body, as a result of the death of Christ, of His vicarious work.

John 17,11,20,21. Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.

All believers everywhere are in the most intimate fellowship with one another, because of their fellowship with God and with their Savior Jesus Christ. They are the communion of saints.

1 Pet.2,9,10. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.

The believers, in their totality, are God's people, His holy nation, chosen by Him in Christ, forming one great communion under His direction.

Matt.16,18. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Church, in the true sense of the term, with all its members, is built upon the rock of Christ and His saving Word, but only he is built on this foundation who has received the Savior by faith.

Hebr.12,23. Ye are come...to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.

All those who have been regenerated, born anew by the power of the Word, have thereby been added to this solemn assembly the names of whose members are registered in heaven.

Rom.3,28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.

Here the principle and condition of membership in the Church is plainly expressed, namely justification by faith, for only by faith can a person enter into fellowship with Christ and be added to the Church of Christ.

Acts 4,12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Christ is the stone which was set at naught by the builders, who became the head of the corner, the Cornerstone in the Church of the Lord. It is faith in His name which brings a person into membership in that Church.

Eph.3,17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

1 Cor. 12, 3. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

This confession of Jesus as the Lord, also emphasised in Rom. 10, 9-13, is, if sincere, an evidence of the faith by which men are received into membership in the Church of Christ.

1 Cor. 3, 11. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

This text disposes of the claims of all those who teach a different way of salvation. Their methods do not build the Church, do not add to its membership, but lead people astray.

John 15, 5.6. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.

The abiding in Christ by faith is the condition of membership in the true Church, and thus a condition of salvation. The Church in the true sense of the term is His body, and one not a member of Christ cannot be saved. He is the Vine, the believers are the branches; if the connection of faith is severed, then membership not only with Christ is lost, but also membership with His body, the Christian Church, i.e., the Vine with its branches.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

The Apostolic Creed: I believe in the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.

The phrase "communion of saints" is evidently not another section of the Third Article, but is the explanation of the words "the holy Christian Church." The Church is made up of saints, it is the fellowship or communion of such as have been regenerated, cleansed, and sanctified through the redemption of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit in and through the gift of faith.

The Large Catechism: Thus the word Kirche (church) means really nothing else than a common assembly, and is not German by idiom, but Greek...Therefore in genuine German, in our mother-tongue, it ought to be called a Christian congregation or assembly (eine christliche Gemeinde oder Sammlung), or, best of all and most clearly, holy Christendom (eine heilige Christenheit). So also the word communio, which is added, ought not to be rendered communion (Gemeinschaft), but congregation (Gemeinde). And it is nothing else than an interpretation or explanation by which some one meant to explain what the Christian Church is...But to speak correct German, it ought to be eine Gemeinde der Heiligen (a congregation of saints), that is, a congregation made up purely of saints, or, to speak yet more plainly, eine heilige Gemeinde, a holy congregation...But this is the meaning and substance of this addition: I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one Head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost in one faith, one mind, and one understanding." (Concordia Trigl., 691.)

Augsburg Confession: Art. VII: The Church is the congregation of saints...Art. VIII: Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers..... (Trigl., 47)

Article VII states the fact of the existence of the Church and indicates where it may be found and by what outward signs its presence may be known, Article VIII defines the Church in its true essence.

polity of the Church. Confession: The Church is not a mere outward government of certain nations, but rather men regenerated throughout the whole world, who agree concerning the Gospel, and have the same Christ, the same Holy Ghost, and the same Sacraments. Although, therefore, hypocrites and wicked men are members of this true Church according to outward rites (titles and offices), yet when the Church is defined, it is necessary to define that which is the living body of Christ, and which is in name and in fact the Church (which is called the body of Christ, and has fellowship not alone in outward signs, but has gifts in the heart, namely the Holy Ghost and faith). And for this there are many reasons. For it is necessary to understand what it is that principally makes us members, and that, living members, of the Church. If we will define the Church only as an outward polity of the good and wicked, men will not understand that the kingdom of Christ is righteousness of heart and the gift of the Holy Ghost (that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, as nevertheless it is; that therein Christ inwardly rules, strengthens, and comforts hearts, and imparts the Holy Ghost and various spiritual gifts, but they will judge that it is only the outward observance of certain forms of worship and rites. Likewise, what difference will there be between the people of the Law and the Church if the Church is an outward polity? But Paul distinguishes the Church from the people of the Law thus, that the Church is a spiritual people, i.e., that it has been distinguished from the heathen not by civil rites... but that it is the true people of God, regenerated by the Holy Ghost... Therefore the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is properly the congregation of saints. (Trigl., 231.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: As God still kept His Church, i.e., some saints in Israel and Judah, so God still preserved His Church, i.e., some saints, under the Papacy, so that the Christian Church has not entirely perished. (Trigl., 417 f.)

Smalcald Articles: For, thank God, (today) a child seven years old knows what the Church is, namely the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd. (Trigl., 499.)

Large Catechism: The Holy Ghost effects our sanctification by the following parts, namely by the communion of saints or the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting; that is, He first leads us into His holy congregation, and places us in the bosom of the Church, whereby He preaches to us and brings us to Christ... Learn, then, to understand this article most clearly. If you are asked: What do you mean by the words: I believe in the Holy Ghost? you can answer: I believe that the Holy Ghost makes me holy, as His name implies. But whereby does He accomplish this, or what are His method or means to this end? Answer: By the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For, in the first place, He has a peculiar congregation in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which He reveals and preaches, (and through which) He illumines and enkindles hearts, that they understand, accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it. For where He does not cause it to be preached and made alive in the heart, so that it is understood, it is lost, as was the case under the Papacy, where faith was entirely put under the bench, and no one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Ghost as his Sanctifier, that is, no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that He has acquired this treasure for us, without our works and merit, and made us acceptable to the Father. What, then, was lacking? This, that the Holy Ghost was

not there to reveal it and cause it to be preached; but men and evil spirits were there, who taught us to obtain grace and be saved by our works. Therefore it is not a Christian Church either; for where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Ghost who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord... But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no holiness (sanctification)... For all outside of Christianity, whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites*, although they believe in, and worship, only one true God, yet know not what His mind towards them is, and cannot expect any love or blessing from Him; therefore they abide in eternal wrath and damnation. For they have not the Lord Christ, and, besides, are not illumined and favored by any gifts of the Holy Ghost. (Trigl., 687. 689. 697.)

Smalcald Articles: And in those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word... Therefore we ought and must constantly maintain this point, that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. It is the devil himself whatsoever is extolled as Spirit without the Word and Sacraments. (Trigl., 495. 497.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Clement of Rome: Thus, brethren, if we do the will of our Father, God, we shall belong to the first Church, the spiritual one... Now I suppose that you are not ignorant that the living Church is the body of Christ. (II Clement, Ch. 14. The Apostolic Fathers, Lake Ed., I, 151.)

Ignatius of Antioch: Christ... was truly nailed to a tree in the flesh for our sakes under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch, ... that He might set up an ensign for all ages through His resurrection, for His saints and believers, whether among the Jews or among the heathen, in one body of His Church. (To the Smyrnaeans, Ch. 1. The Apostolic Fathers, Lake Ed., I, 253.)

Cyprian of Carthage: Peter, answering in the name of the Church, says: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and known that Thou art the Son of the living God. For he wishes to signify and indicate that those who have separated themselves from Christ are lost by their own fault, but that the Church, which believes in Christ and which holds fast that which it has once understood, will never forsake Him, and that those are the Church who remain in the House of God. On the other hand we see that those are not plants planted by the Father, God, and that they do not stand firm as fruit, but like chaff sifted by the wind of the enemy, of whom also John says in his letter: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they were of us, they would have remained with us. (Epp. I, I, 3. Walther, Kirche und Amt, 8, note.)

*Walther notes: That Luther here places also the false Christians and the hypocrites outside of the Christian Church indicates that he is speaking of the invisible Church, for in the visible Church, in the corporate body of a Christian congregation, they may be holding membership, at least temporarily.

John Chrysostom: If thou fleest to the Church, do not flee to the location, but flee to her in the mind, for the Church is not wall and roof, but faith and a (virtuous) life.... Therefore, on account of her firmness and unshakable nature Scripture calls her a mountain; on account of her moral purity a virgin; on account of her relationship with God a daughter; on account of the many children which she, the barren, brought forth, one that has born seven; a thousand names, that she set forth her noble descent. (Hom. 2 de capto Eutropio, Walther, Kirche und Amt, 9, note.)

Jerome: The Church is the congregation of all saints.--The Church of Christ is none other than the soul of those believing in Christ. (In cap. 20 Jobi. In Ps. 87. Walther, L.c., 9, note.)

Augustine: The body of this Head is the Church, not that which is in this place, but that which is here and in the whole world; not that which exists at this time, but from Abel down to those who will be born until the end and will believe in Christ, the entire people of saints that belong to one community, which community is the body of Christ, whose Head is Christ. (In Ps. 92. Walther, L.c., 10, note.)

Luther: We desire simply to remain with the faith of the children, which states: I believe...the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. Their faith indicates clearly what the Church is, namely a communion of saints, that is, an assembly or gathering of such people as are Christians and holy; that is called a Christian, holy assembly or gathering of such people as are Christians and holy; that is called a Christian, holy assembly or Church...The Christians are a special called people, and are not simply called Ecclesia, Church or people, but Sancta, Catholica, Christiana, that is, a holy Christian people, which believes in Christ, for which it is called a Christian people, and has the Holy Ghost who daily sanctifies them, not only through the forgiveness of sins which Christ has earned for them (as the Antinomians foolishly claim), but also by putting off, purging out, and putting to death sins, on which account they are called a holy people. A "holy, Christian Church," then, is in effect a people consisting of Christians and saints, or, as we are accustomed to say, holy Christendom; or, the entire Christian Church. And if, in the instruction of children such words had been used: I believe that there is a Christian, holy people, then all the trouble could easily have been avoided that has now entered under the term "Church" (Kirche), ambiguous and unclear as it is. For the expression: a Christian, holy people would clearly and mightily have brought both understanding and judgment, what the Church is and what not. For any one hearing this word: Christian, holy people, could quickly have reasoned: The Pope is no people, much less a holy Christian people. Thus also the bishops, priests, and monks, they are not a holy Christian people, for they do not believe in Christ, they do not live in a saintly manner, but are the wicked, disgraceful people of the devil. For whosoever does not rightly believe in Christ, he is not a Christian. Whosoever does not have the Holy Ghost against the sin, is not holy. Therefore they cannot be a Christian, holy people, Sancta et Catholica Ecclesia...Ecclesia is intended to designate the holy, Christian people, not only at the time of the apostles, but till the end of the world. So that here on earth always, in the course of life, there be a holy, Christian people, in whom Christ lives, works, and rules, per redemptionem, through grace and the forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Ghost through vivification and sanctification, through a daily purging from sins and renewal of life, that we do not remain in sins, but may lead a new life. (Von den Konziliis und Kirchen. St. Louis Ed., 11, 152.)

7

Luther: Outside of the Christian Church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation. (Sermon for Second Christmas Day. St. Louis Ed., 11, 152.)

Luther: Therefore I conclude that the Christian Church is not bound to any place, person, or time...But if you ask how this takes place? I answer in brief: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints." If this article is true then it follows that no one can see or feel the holy Christian Church; nor may he say: Behold here she is or there. For what one believes, that one does not see or feel. (Antwort auf das überchristliche Buch Emsers. St. Louis Ed., 18, 1348 f.)

Johann Gerhard: We give this definition of the Church that she is the communion of saints, in order that no one may believe that the Church is merely a certain outward political organization of good and evil people, since she, to speak accurately and in the proper sense of the word, is a holy assembly of those who, by the bond of the Holy Ghost, are united in true faith and in true love. (Loc.theol., De ecclesia, 751. Walther, L.C., 5.)

Luther: It is true: There is no preacher outside of the Christian Church; that is impossible. It is decided that God will not make Christians unless they have been baptized and called through the Gospel. He wants all those who are called Christians to be separated from the world through the Gospel and Baptism. Therefore there is no true preacher or prophet outside of the Church. That the Scripture says, and no one can deny it...Outside of this Christian Church there is no salvation nor Holy Spirit, for the Symbolum says: I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church... Thus it is also true: Whosoever is not in the Christian Church, and whose doctrine is not included by her, is truly a false preacher...That is called the one Christian Church, which believes in Christ and desires salvation through Him, not through our works or merits; and what the Holy Ghost says to us, He says to all Christians, no matter where they are. That is the Bethlehem and the tribe of Judah from which Christ comes. So it is true, also, that outside of the Church there is no prophet, no Christian, no teacher or preacher, for it is one body and one soul which hang together as do the members of the body, for they are members of the body. A fist that is chopped off is dead, does not live, is not connected with the body; thus also a heretic, through his false doctrine and unbelief, is separated from the Christian Church and is dead; for those who are outside of the Christian Church are dead. (Exposition of John's Gospel, Chap. 7. St. Louis Ed., 8, 97 ff.)

Johann Gerhard: Bellarmine objects: We are all obliged, on pain of eternal death, to join the true Church and to remain in it; but this cannot be done if the Church is invisible. I answer: 1. This must of necessity be understood of the universal Church, outside of which there is no salvation. But one is joined to the universal Church if one, by true faith, is joined to Christ, its Head; this faith is active in love, whereby we are united with the other members of the mystical body. 2. Although neither Christ, the Head of the universal Church, nor His true and genuine members are obvious before our eyes, yet is it sufficient for our salvation that we are joined to them by the internal bond of the Spirit. 3. It is indeed necessary that we also be joined with the visible Church in its outward organization, in which the heavenly doctrine is proclaimed in its purit and the Sacraments are administered legitimately, but this connection with the outer organization of the Church is not simply and absolutely necessary. 4. A time may come

in which such a particular church, which is publicly known and conspicuous through the purity of doctrine and the right use of the sacraments, cannot be found, but the external ministry of the Church is corrupt and depraved...5. And then a difference is to be made of a twofold entry into the Church; the first is the local and manifest entry into a particular church by an outward confession of faith; the other is the spiritual and hidden entry into the universal Church by the internal assent of the heart. Even if the former does not take place in time of persecution and waves of false teachings, yet the latter always takes place. (Loc.de ecclesia, #84. Walther, L.c., 168-170.)

The Church, in the first, proper, and real sense of the term, is invisible, since faith, the distinguishing characteristic of the members of the Church, is definitely and infallibly known to God alone and since the appearance and the activities of faith can be simulated and imitated. Hence no hypocrites, no unbelievers or unregenerated person, no heretic belongs to the Church in the true sense of the word (the una sancta).

A. Proof from Scripture.

Luke 17, 20, 21. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Walther refers to the glossa ordinaria explaining this passage: It cannot be observed, because My kingdom is not temporal, but spiritual, which now begins through faith.*

*Although the classical use of ἐντός is generally "in the midst of, enclosed by," the connotation of "hidden, sheltered within" is not lacking even there, and the contrast presented in the text at this point clearly compels the understanding "not subject to observation, hidden away within."

1 Pet. 2, 5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The text clearly shows that the true Church is a spiritual, hence not a visible structure.

2 Tim. 2, 19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Only the Lord knows His own; but only those who know the Lord by faith are members of the true Church; therefore no man can see the Church in the real sense of the term.

Col. 3, 3. Your life is hid with Christ in God.

Although there is an outward manifestation of faith on the part of believers, yet their true life is that of the fellowship with God, hidden away from the sight of men. Compare also Ps. 45, 13, where it is said of the bride of Christ, of the Church, that she is "all glorious within," where the addition of "the palace" certainly is a gloss, and we may well think of the inner glory which is the essential feature of the believers.

Rom. 8, 9. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

Here is the opposite side of the picture, for it is plainly stated that one not having the Spirit of Christ, not possessing true faith is

not a possession of Christ, is not a member of the true Church, which is the spiritual body of Christ.

1 John 2,19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Thus the hypocrites or false believers, who finally left the outward communion of the visible congregation, are here declared not to have been members of the Church in the true sense; they were not actually in fellowship with those who were one with Christ.

John 15,6. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.

As the entire context shows, a person who is no longer a believer is not in connection with Christ, but is severed from Him spiritually, even if he is still a member of some visible Christian congregation. Hypocrites and false Christians are not members of the Church in the true sense of the term, no matter how well they simulate and imitate the appearance and activities of true faith.

Eph.5,27. That He (Christ) might present it (the Church) to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

These words, as well as the entire context, show that no one who is not a true believer, no hypocrite, no unregenerated person can be considered a member of the Church in the real and primary sense of the word.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

The Apostolic Creed: I believe...the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.

If the Church, according to these words, is an object of faith, it cannot be a visible entity, for faith is concerned with invisible things, not with such as are visible. As St. Augustine says: This is faith, to believe what thou dost not see.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: If we will define the Church only as an outward polity of the good and wicked, men will not understand that the kingdom of Christ is righteousness of heart and the gift of the Holy Ghost...as nevertheless it is; that therein Christ inwardly rules, strengthens, and comforts hearts, and imparts the Holy Ghost and various spiritual gifts, but they will judge that it is only the outward observance of certain forms of worship and rites. Likewise, what difference will there be between the people of the law and the Church if the Church is an outward polity? But Paul distinguishes the Church from the people of the law thus, that the Church is a spiritual people, i.e., that it has been distinguished from the heathen not by civil rites, but that it is the true people of God, regenerated by the Holy Ghost...Therefore, the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is properly the congregation of saints. For the wicked are ruled by the devil, and are captives of the devil; they are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ.--But what need is there of words in a manifest matter? If the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, it follows necessarily that the wicked, since they are in the kingdom of the devil, are not the Church; although in this life, because the kingdom of Christ has not yet been revealed, they are mingled with the Church and hold offices (as teachers,

and other officers) in the Church. But then we are asked the kingdom of Christ, for the reason that the revelation has not yet been made. For that is always the kingdom which He quickens by His Spirit, whether it be revealed or be covered by the cross; just as He who has now been glorified is the same Christ who was before afflicted. And with this clearly agree the parables of Christ, who says, Matt.13,38, that the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the Wicked One. The field, He says, is the world, not the Church. Thus John (Matt.3,12: He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff) speaks concerning the whole race of the Jews, and says that it will come to pass that the true Church will be separated from that people. Therefore, this passage is more against the adversaries than in favor of them, because it shows that the true and spiritual people is to be separated from the carnal people. Christ also speaks of the outward appearance of the Church when He says, Matt.13,47: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, likewise, to ten virgins; and He teaches that the Church has been covered by a multitude of evils, in order that this stumbling-block may not offend the pious; likewise, in order that we may know that the Word and Sacraments are efficacious even when administered by the wicked. And meanwhile He teaches that these godless men, although they have the fellowship of outward signs, are nevertheless not the true kingdom of Christ and members of Christ; for they are members of the kingdom of the devil. (Trigl., 251.233. Cp.p.229,## 9.10; 237, # 29.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: The Church is defined by the article in the Creed which teaches us to believe that there is a holy Catholic Church. The wicked indeed are not a holy church. And that which follows, namely the communion of saints, seems to be added in order to explain what the Church signifies, namely, the congregation of saints, who have with one another the fellowship of the same Gospel or doctrine and of the Holy Ghost, who renews, sanctifies, and governs their hearts. (Ibid., 229.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Augustine: If I consider everything, I believe that I have good reason to say that some are in the Church in this manner that they themselves also comprise the house of God, which is said to have been founded upon a rock, which is called the one dove, the beautiful bride without spot or wrinkle, the closed garden, the sealed fountain, the spring of living water, paradise with its fruits; but others, it is plain, are in the house in this manner that they do not belong to the structure of the house itself, nor to the fellowship of fruitful and peaceful righteousness, but may be said to be as the chaff among the wheat. (Lib.7 de bapt., c.51, Walther, L.c., 29, note.)

Augustine: The Church itself is undefiled and chaste and pure, and therefore the avaricious, the robbers, the usurers, not only those outside, but also those within, are not members.--It should not be believed that the heretics hold membership in the body of Christ, which is the Church, because they have become partakers of His Sacraments with their bodies, etc.; they are not in that fellowship of the Church of Christ which, on account of the internal connection and contact grows to the full growth of God, for the Church is established upon the rock, as the Lord says: 'On this rock will I build My Church.' Lib.4 de bapt., c.2.--Lib.2 contra lit.Petilian, c.113. Walther, L.c., 14, note.)

Luther: When I said that the Kingdom of Christ, that is the Kingdom of Christ, at the term like a life, definitely de-
fines when he says: "the Kingdom of God is within you, with observation
either will men say, in, here, or, there," which the other evan-
gelist express thus: here is Christ, or there. All of which is to
say: The Kingdom of Christ does not consist of external things, places,
times, persons, works, but, as he says in that passage, "the Kingdom
of God is within you." From which it does not follow that Christ is
nowhere, but that He is everywhere and fills all things. (Against the
Heavenly Prophets, St. Louis Ed., 20, 282 f.)

Luther: As a human being consists of two parts, body and soul,
he is not reckoned a member of the Christian Church according to his
body, but according to his soul, yea, according to his faith... But
he would be so lacking in sense as to say that the soul must have a
bodily head?... St. Paul says, Col 3, 3, that our life is not on earth,
but "hidden with Christ in God." If Christendom, then, were a visible
gathering, one could in the case of each person see in his body whether
he were a Christian, a Turk, or a Jew; just as I can see by the
external marks of the body whether a person is man, woman, or child,
black or white. Also, in a public meeting I can see whether he is at
Littenberg or at Leipzig, whether he is come together with others
or not; but I cannot tell whether or not he believes. -- There-
fore let him who would not err hold fast this fact, that Christen-
dom (the Christian Church) is a spiritual gathering of souls in one
faith and that no one is considered a Christian on account of his
body; in order that he may know that the natural, real, true, essential
Christendom has its being in the spirit and in no outward thing, no
matter how called. (Of the Papacy at Rome, against Alfeld, June, 1520.
St. Louis Ed., 18, 1017.)

Luther: Therefore we rightly confess in our holy Christian Creed
that we believe one holy Church. For she is invisible, lives in spirit
in a place which is inaccessible, therefore her holiness cannot be
seen. For God has hidden her in such a way and covered her with
frailties, sins and errors, with various forms of crosses and offenses
that she never openly appears to the sense of feeling. (Exposition
of Galatians, chap. 5, 19. St. Louis Ed., 9, 702.)

Luther: This section: "I believe the holy Christian Church," is
as much an article of faith as the others. Therefore reason cannot
recognize her, though she put on all spectacles. The devil is able
to cover her with offenses and sects, that you will take offense at
her. Thus also God can hide her beneath all kinds of frailties and
deficiencies, that you may well become a fool on that account and
draw a false conclusion concerning her. It is necessary to grasp her,
not by sight, but by faith; faith concerns that which we do not see.
Hebr. 11, 1. (Introduction to the Book of Revelation, St. Louis Ed.,
14, 139.)

Luther: The Church is a high, profound, hidden thing, so that
no one can know or see her, but that she must be recognized and be-
lieved only by the signs of Baptism, Sacrament, and the Word. (Wider
Rans Wurst. St. Louis Ed., 17, 133.)

Luther: Since I had called the Christian Church a spiritual
congregation, you ridicule me as though I would build a church as
Plato would build a city that is nowhere; and you let your notion
please you so well as if you had really hit upon something. You say:

All Christians, by reason of the faith which is in them, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are made partakers of the gifts and blessings which are promised to all who believe and obey. These gifts and blessings are the forgiveness of sins, and the inheritance of the Kingdom of God, and the life which is in Him. They are, in particular, in possession of the Office of the Keys, of the rights and powers which Christ has given to His Church on earth.

A. Proof From Scripture.

a. The first group of passages speaks of the gifts and blessings which come to the individual believer by faith.

John 20, 31. These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name.

Acts 26, 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in He.

Rom. 5, 1, 2. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Gal. 2, 20. Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Eph. 3, 12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.

1 John 5, 4. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

b. The second group of passages speaks of gifts and blessings held collectively, as it were in a corporate capacity, and thus to find their expression in the life of the Christians.

1 Pet. 2, 5, 9. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood... Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Here the honoring name of priests is given to the Christians, whereby they are assured of the rights and powers of the New Testament priesthood.

Rev. 1, 6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

Rev. 5, 10. And hath made us unto God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.

Here again both authority and power are given to the believers, and a form of government is ascribed to them.

1 John 2, 20-27. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things... But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.

Christians, by virtue of their faith, are the anointed of the Lord, in possession of the truth of Scriptures.

2 Cor. 11, 2. I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

John 3, 39. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice.

Eph. 5, 32. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

In these four passages the Church is spoken of as the bride of Christ, in possession of all the marvelous gifts and blessings which He has given to her by His vicarious atonement, in charge of these blessings with respect to others.

1 Cor. 12, 27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

The believers, as the body of Christ in the aggregate, and as members dependent upon this Head and united in the fellowship of members toward one another, have strength and authority from Him and are to exhibit the life from and in Him.

Matt. 23, 8-11. But ye are not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

According to this passage all Christians are brethren of the same rank, who therefore should use together the rights and powers given by Christ. *Regd. 11*

c. The third group of passages emphasizes still more strongly the power of the Christians in the corporate gathering known as the Christian congregation.

1 Cor. 3, 21-23. All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Here the Scripture plainly states that all Christians are in possession of all the great blessings in Christ, and are therefore to use this power in keeping with His conditions of donation.

Eph. 4, 7, 11, 12. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ... And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

John 20, 22-23. And what is the gift given to them, and faith unto them. Verily ye are the Holy Church, because as sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and as ye retain, they are retained.

The gift of the Holy Ghost, according to these words, includes the power to remit sin. It is a power given to the Church.

Matt. 18, 15-18. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church (ekklesia: the congregation); but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

This text gives us the wider application of Matt. 16, 15-19, and the execution of the power vested in the individual Christians by faith, as members of the invisible Church, in this visible manner, is an evidence of the power transmitted to the believers.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: And Christ speaks in these words: Whatsoever ye shall bind, etc., and indicates to whom He has given the keys, namely, to the Church: Where two or three are gathered together in My name. Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church, when He says: Tell it unto the Church. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 511.)

Smalcald Articles: The keys are an office and power given by Christ to the Church for binding and loosing sin. (Art. VII. Of the Keys. Trigl., 493.)

Smalcald Articles: They cite against us certain passages, namely, Matt. 16, 18 f.: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; also: I will give unto thee the keys; also John 21, 15: Feed My sheep, and some others... In all these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of apostles, as appears from the text itself. For Christ asks not Peter alone, but says: Whom do ye say that I am? And what is here said (to Peter alone) in the singular number: I will give unto thee; and whatsoever thou shalt bind, etc., is elsewhere expressed (to their entire number), in the plural, Matt. 18, 18: Whatsoever ye shall bind, etc. And in John 20, 23: Whosoever sins ye remit, etc. These words testify that the keys are given alike to all the apostles, and that all the apostles are alike sent forth. In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys, Matt. 18, 19, adds: If two or three of you shall agree on earth, etc. Therefore He grants the keys principally and immediately to the Church, just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling... For wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church as Paul also

not given to the Priesthood, but to the Church. It is recorded that Jesus gave the keys to Peter. And the sacraments, among the gifts specially belonging to the Church, pertain to all Christians, and are given for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the Church, and not merely to certain persons. (Matt. 16, 19, 20; Where two or three are gathered together in My name, etc. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops Trigl., III, 507.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Irenaeus of Lugdunum: Where the Church is, there is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace. (Adv. haereses, 2, 5. (Walther, L.c., 51, note.)

Tertullian of Carthage: We are in error if we believe that things not permitted to the priests are permitted to the laity. Are not we laymen priests also? It is written: "He has made us to be kings and priests before God and His Father." The authority of the Church has made the distinction between the clergy and the people, and with the organization of the clergy it received higher honor. Where the members of the clergy are not organized, therefore, they will administer the Lord's Supper and baptize and be priest unto thyself. Where there are three, there is the Church; for every one lives by his faith, and there is no respect of persons with God. (Exhort. ad castitatem, c. 5. Walther, L.c., 52, note.)

Augustine: When it was said to him (Peter): To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, He designated the whole Church... The Church, which is founded upon Christ, in Peter received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, for what the Church is in her proper nature in Christ, that Peter is figuratively on the rock; by which figurative language the rock designates Christ, Peter the Church. (Liber I de Doctrina Chr., c. 18. Walther, L.c., 52, note.)

Augustine: Not one man, but the totality of the Church has received the keys. For that reason the excellence of Peter is set forth, because he is the figure of the one and universal Church. (De diversis, # 108. Walther, L.c., 52, note.)

Luther: The keys are not the pope's (as he falsely states), but they belong to the Church, that is, to the people of Christ, to the people of God or to the holy Christian people, as far as the whole world extends, or wherever there are Christians. For they cannot all be in Rome, unless the whole world previously be in Rome, which will not happen for a long time. Just as Baptism, the Sacrament, the Word of God do not belong to the pope, but to the people of Christ, and therefore the keys are called Claves Ecclesiae (keys of the Church), not claves Papae (keys of the pope). (Von den Konziliis und Kirchen. St. Louis Ed., 16, 2279.)

Luther: The word "thee" (Matt. 16, 19) is rightly understood of no individual person, of no bishop, but of the Church itself, which continues and has the office of the ministry, which also endures. (Notes on Matt. 16, 19 of 1538. St. Louis Ed. 7, 280.)

Luther: It is true, the keys are given to St. Peter, but not to him as a private individual, but as representing the Christian Church,

and are therefore given to us and then to comfort our consciences; so Peter or any priest (pastor) is the servant bearing the keys; the Church is the mistress and bride, whom he is to serve with the power of the keys. (Sermon for the Day of Peter and Paul. St. Louis Ed., 11, 2311 ff.)

Luther: The Church alone possesses the keys, no one else, although the bishop and pope may use them, as the man to whom the service has been transmitted by the congregation. (An earlier sermon for the same day. St. Louis Ed., 11, 2304.)

Luther: There is no doubt that no one retains or forgives sin but he alone who so certainly has the Holy Ghost that you and I know it, as the words of Christ here (John 20, 22-23) convincingly state. But that is no one but the congregation of all believers in Christ; she alone has these keys, concerning that you may have no doubt. And he who, in addition to this, appropriates the keys to himself, is truly a cunning sacrilegious person, whether he be the pope or any body else. With regard to this Church every one is sure that she has the Holy Ghost, as Paul has abundantly proved this on the basis of Christ's doctrine and all Scripture, and as it is shortly presented in the Creed, where we say: I believe that there is a holy Christian Church... Therefore our faith is so ordered that the statement of the forgiveness of sins must follow the statement: A holy Christian Church, which, in turn, must follow the words: I believe in the Holy Ghost. In order that it might be understood that there is no holy Church without the Holy Ghost, and without the holy Church no forgiveness of sins. Therefore it is not true that the pope has the keys, but only the Church, and not he, but she alone retains and absolves, in which office he serves her, as do all priests. Whence it follows that the pope in his office is a servant of servants, as he boasts and yet does not follow his boast, so that even a child in the cradle has more right to the keys than he, likewise all those that have the Holy Spirit. (Of Auricular Confession. St. Louis Ed., 19, 845 ff.)

Luther: Of this Bridegroom (Christ) and His bride (The Church) we are born through Holy Baptism... And we are not only His children, but also His brethren, as He says in Psalm 22, 22: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren," and Matt. 12, 50: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father... the same is My brother." So that we are ministers and priests, not only by the right of children, but also by that of brethren.--This our priestly station, with which we were born and which we have inherited no one shall take, hinder, and darken for us, but we want it drawn forth, exclaimed over and praised with all honors, that it should shed its brilliance and shine like the sun himself... For which reason the Holy Ghost in the New Testament has also prevented the name Sacerdos, minister or priest, from being given even to an apostle or to those holding other offices, but it is the name of the baptized people or the Christians alone, as a name with which we are born and which we inherit through Baptism, for none of us, in Baptism, is born an apostle, preacher, teacher, pastor, but we are so born as priests; afterwards certain ones are taken from the number of such born priests and are called or elected to such offices, who in the name and stead of all should perform such office. (Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe. St. Louis Ed., 19, 1259 ff.)

Martin Chemnitz: All believers have in common the fellowship or the participation of all those goods which are contained in the following articles of the remission of sins and of eternal life. Hence the Church, with a most sweet comfort, is called the communion of saints. For although the gifts in the saints are different, yet, so far as the remission of sins and eternal life are concerned, there is a communion of all saints, who all, in a common, similar, and equal way through the grace of God, on account of the merit of Christ, by faith accept the remission of sins and eternal life. For on that account those articles are joined in the Creed: Communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. In the third place, because the saints are members of one body, therefore, the offices of charity between themselves are and must be common, as Paul was wont to show and explain by the example of members in the human body. And this is the communion of saints according to the explanation of Scripture. (Examen Conc. Trid., De indulgentiis, Arg. 6., p. 811.)

Abraham Calov: It is well-known that to the Church has been entrusted the right to call, just as also the keys and church discipline, according to Matt. 18, 18: "Verily, I say unto you: Whatsoever ye shall bind" etc.; 1 Cor. 5, 21: "All things are yours"; 1 Cor. 4, 1; Rom. 3, 2; 9, 4; 1 Cor. 5, 1 ff. (System. VIII, 334. Walther, Rechte Gestalt, 30.)

10 The Church is the sum total of those who profess the Christian faith, accepting the Bible as the inspired and infallible truth of the eternal and omniscient God. The use of the means of grace, of the Gospel and the Sacraments, in a church organization indicates the presence of true believers, and therefore of the Church in the true sense of the term, in such a body.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Matt. 13, 47, 48. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

This is clearly stated of the outward appearance of the so-called visible Church in the world, as it presents itself to the observation of men.

Matt. 25, 1, 2. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Matt. 22, 2, 11. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.

It is evident here that the name "kingdom" in the sense of "Church" is given to this visible body with its good and evil members, with its orthodox Christians and false believers, with its sincere Christians and its hypocrites, only in a derived or secondary sense of the term, and that the entire organization bears the glorious name of Church only for the sake of those who are truly members of Christ's body. But that the name "congregation" or "church" (ekklesia) is not abused when it is applied to such a visible organization, is evident from Scriptures which, although teaching that only the true believers are in reality members of the Church, since they alone are members of Christ, yet speak of an assembly of such as are gathered about the Word and Sacraments as a congregation or church (ekklesia). Thus we are told, Matt. 18, 17: "Tell it to the church," where the reference is obviously to a particular or local congregation. Thus also the apostle Paul addresses those who met in the various Galatian cities and in Corinth, as churches and even "church of God," and this in spite of the fact that the apostle was constrained to say of many of those who were members of the Galatian churches that they had lost Christ, and though he knew that names were carried on the register of the congregation at Corinth which were not those of true Christians. The figure of speech according to which an entire thing is given a name which rightly belongs to a part only is called synekdoche.

Mark 4, 26, 27. And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

Is. 55. 10. As the seed is sown, so the Word of God is sown, and it bringeth forth fruit. It is sown in the earth, and it bringeth forth fruit, and it is sown in the power, and bread to the eater: so shall the Word be that groweth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.

It is evident that the Word of God is not only the seed out of which alone the members of the Church are born, but it is also certain that this Word always exerts its power according to the intention of the heavenly Sower, even if we know not how and have no specific outward facts to support our belief. For even if merely the baptized children in a congregation are truly believers, the Church is present, and the Word is bearing fruit. Wherever, therefore, the seed is sown, wherever the Word and the Sacraments, as means of grace, are used, although one cannot see the Church, yet he has definite indications and signs that the Church, an assembly of true believers and saints in Christ Jesus, is present at such a place. With regard to the Sacraments we have other passages.

Matt. 28. 19. 20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Mark 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

1 Cor. 10. 17. For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.

Acts 2. 41. 42. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Again we see: Where the Word of God is preached, where Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are administered, there we may say that there are members of the body of Christ, and concerning such a place we may and should confess: Here is the holy Christian Church. The use of the means of grace indicates the presence of true believers, and therefore of the Church in the true sense of the word, in such a body.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Augsburg Confession: Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith... (Article 8. Trigl., 47.)

Note: Since our confession declares that the Church in the proper meaning of the term is the congregation of saints, it follows that an organization which includes both good and evil persons can be called Church only in a derived or figurative sense.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: And the gloss upon the Decrees says that the Church in its wide sense embraces good and

...likewise that the Church is not only in name, not in fact; but that the good of the Church both in fact and in name. Although hypocrites and wicked men are members of this true Church according to outward signs (titles and offices), yet when the Church is defined, it is necessary to define that which is the living body of Christ, and which is in name and in fact the Church (which is called the body of Christ, and has Fellowship not alone in outward signs, but has gifts in the heart, namely the Holy Ghost and faith). (Article VII. VIII. Of the Church. Trigl., 229. 231.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Christ also speaks of the outward appearance of the Church when He says, Matt. 13, 47: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, likewise, To ten virgins; and He teaches that the Church has been covered by a multitude of evils, in order that this stumbling-block might not offend the pious. (L.c., 233.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Yet we confess that in this life many hypocrites and wicked men, mingled with these, have the fellowship of outward signs, who are members of the Church according to this fellowship of outward signs. (L.c., 237.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God; which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be recognized, namely the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. (Namely, where God's Word is pure, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, and there are Christians). (L.c., 227.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: We are speaking not of an imaginary Church, which is to be found nowhere; but we say and know certainly that this Church, wherein saints live, is and abides truly upon earth; namely, that some of God's children are here and there in all the world, in various kingdoms, islands, lands, and cities, from the rising of the sun to its setting, who have truly learned to know Christ and His Gospel. And we add the marks: the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the Sacraments. (L.c., 233.)

The Formula of Concord rejects the error of the Anabaptists: That there is no true Christian congregation (church) in which sinners are still found. (XII. Of Other Factions and Sects. Trigl., 839. 1099.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Augustine: It is the custom of Scripture to speak of a part as of the whole, as the apostle praises the Corinthians in the first parts of his letter, just as though they were all praiseworthy, although this was true only of some, and afterwards he reproves them in various places of the same letter in such a manner, as if they all were guilty, although this was true only of some. If any one will diligently note this custom of Scriptures, which appears very often throughout the whole Book, he will solve many a thing which seems to be contradictory. (Ep. 59 ad Paulin. Walther, Kirche und Amt, 76, note.)

NE

Augustine: We come this day to the Church
there the good as well as evil, but little church and most. (Tract.
6 in Joh. Walther, L.C., '76 note.)

Gregory the Great: At present the net of faith contains us,
good and evil, mingled after the likeness of fishes mixed together,
but the shore will reveal what the net of the Church drew out...
The Church at present collects the good and the evil at the same
time and does not make a selection of those which it draws, because
she does not know those which she might select. (Hom. 11 et 24
in Evang. Walther, L.C., '77, note.)

Luther: The present passage (Joel 3, 22) contains the article
of our holy Christian faith: I believe the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints. He says that Jerusalem will be holy, and
strangers will no longer pass through her... But in order that this
article may be understood the more clearly, the reader must be re-
minded of the fact that Scripture speaks of the Church in a twofold
way. For in the first place Scripture includes in the word Church
the sum total of those who confess the same form of doctrine and use
the same Sacraments, although many hypocrites and godless are mingled
with her, as Christ says, Matt. 20, 16.: "Many are called, but few
are chosen." Also, Mark 16, 16: "He that believeth and is baptized
shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." For the
last part of the verse shows that some are baptized who still do not
believe, and are therefore condemned, as also the parable of the wed-
ding feast shows. Matt. 22, 11 ff. For those who are at the wedding
feast are indeed all called, but not all of them have wedding gar-
ments on, and these are cast out. Thus also the parable of the net
of fishes, Matt. 13, 47 ff., likewise of the wheat and the tares,
Matt. 13, 24 ff., pictures the Church as an assembly in which evil
and good are together. And yet there are, in this common mass,
always some elect; that is, such as receive the Word in true faith,
and with it the Holy Ghost, for the ministry will not be without
fruit. This honestly pure part Scripture calls the Church, and to
it the adjective "holy" is properly applied. (Exposition of the
prophet Joel of the year 1545. St. Louis Ed. 6, 1628 f.)

Luther: St. Jerome here raises a great question, why Paul calls
them congregations, since they were no congregations? For, says he,
Paul writes to the apostate Galatians, who have turned from Christ
and from grace to Moses and the Law. I answer: Paul calls them "con-
gregations in Galatia" according to a common figure of speech,
synekdoche, which is very often used in Scripture. Thus, when he
writes to the Corinthians, he congratulates them, 1 Cor. 1, 4 f.,
because the grace of God in Christ was given to them. And yet many
of them had been misled by false apostles and did not believe in
the resurrection of the dead. Thus we to-day call the Roman Church
holy and all its dioceses holy, although she has apostasized and
the bishops and her servants are godless, for God rules in the midst
of His enemies. Ps. 110, 2. Likewise the Antichrist is sitting in
the temple of God, 2 Thess. 2, 4, and Satan is in the midst of the
children of God, Job 1, 6. --Therefore, although the Church is in
the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, as St. Paul says
Phil 2, 15, although she is in the midst of wolves and robbers, that
is, ruled by spiritual tyrants, she is nevertheless the Church.
Even in the city of Rome, although she is worse than Sodom and Go-
morrha, there still remains Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Word
and the text of the Gospel, the Holy Scripture, the ministry, the

one of the 1st, and the name of God. In the 1st, it is he who does not have it, is for that reason not accounted for the treasure is there. Therefore the Church is holy, even where the enthusiasts are in command, if but they do not deny the Word of God and the Sacraments. For where these are denied, there can be no Church. Therefore the one holy Church is everywhere where the Word and the Sacraments remain in their substance, although the Antichrist is ruler there... Thus the temple of God must be there also, where the spiritual tyrants rule, and must be maintained under them. Therefore we answer in brief upon this question that the Church in the whole world is in all places where there are the Gospel and the Sacraments. (Longer Exposition of the Letter to the Galatians. St. Louis Ed., 9, 42-44.)

Luther: The Church on earth, speaking of the external communion, is a gathering of those who hear the right doctrine of the Gospel of Christ, believe it and confess it, and have the Holy Ghost in them, who sanctifies them and works in them through the Word and the Sacraments; among whom nevertheless some are false Christians and hypocrites, who with the others adhere to the same doctrine and have a fellowship of the Sacraments and of external offices in the Church. (Sermon on the Gospel for the 20th Sun. after Trin. St. Louis Ed., 11, 1759.)

Luther: But you might say: If the Church is entirely in the spirit and is altogether a spiritual thing, no one will be able to know, where in all the world a part of her is to be found; that would be a strange thing, and unheard of... How should we understand that Christ teaches us that the sheep should be fed, John 21, 16, 17, and Paul, to rule the Church, Acts 20, 28, and Peter 1 Ep., 5, 2, to feed the flock of Christ, if the believers throughout the world could not be found in certain places? For who will preach to the spirits? Or which spirit will preach to us?... Now you ask: By which sign may I recognize the Church? Surely some definite, visible sign must be given, whereby we are gathered together to hear the Word of God. Answer: Yes, such a sign is necessary, and we have it, namely Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and above all the Gospel. These three are the Christian's watchword and distinguishing mark. Where you see these in use, that is, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Gospel, no matter where or with whom, do not doubt that the Church is there... That is the unity of the spirit, not of place, not of persons, not of external things or bodies... No one can see the Church, but it must be believed under the sign of the Word; and it is impossible that this Word will sound forth but only in the Church through the Holy Ghost. (Luther's Reply to the Book of M. Ambrosius Catharinus, of 1521. St. Louis Ed. 18, 1464 ff.)

Luther: The Creed, as the children confess it, teaches us that there must be a Christian holy people on the earth and remain until the end of time. For it is an article of faith, which cannot stop until that which it believes will come to pass; as Christ promises, Matt. 28, 20: "I am with you always until the end of the world." But how can a poor, erring person take note, where such a holy Christian people is in the world?... In the first place it is a mark of this Christian, holy people, where it has the holy Word of God. Although matters are somewhat unequal here, as St. Paul says: Some have it altogether pure, others do not have it pure... Where you hear and see such Word preached, believed, confessed, and lived after, there you may have no doubt that certainly at that place

There must be a true Ecclēsia sancta catholica, a Christian, holy people... In the second place one will recognize the people of God in the holy Sacrament of Baptism, where it is taught, believed, and used correctly according to Christ's order... In the third place one may recognize the people of God or the Christian, holy people by the holy Sacrament of the Altar, where it is taught, believed, and used correctly according to Christ's ordinances... In the fifth place one may externally recognize the Church by the fact that she consecrates or calls servants of the Church, or has offices which she must provide for... In the sixth place one may externally recognize the holy, Christian people by prayer, praising and thanking God publicly... In the seventh place one may recognize the holy Christian people externally by the sacred mark of the holy cross, that she must endure misfortune and persecution, tribulation and evil. (Von den Konziliis und Kirchen. St. Louis Ed., 16, 2274 ff.)

Note: Every student of the doctrines here presented will profit by a careful study of the entire writing of which the main points are here given. It is a veritable mine of information concerning the Biblical understanding of the Church in its every aspect.

5.

The true visible Church is that church confessional fellowship which, as a body, in all points and in all doctrines, adheres to the Word of God, preaches the Gospel of the justification of sinners in all its purity, and administers the Sacraments in agreement with the institution of Christ.

A. Proof from Scripture.

John 8, 31, 32. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

That, then, is the distinguishing mark of the true disciples of Christ, that they continue in His Word, remain with it and in it, for then only will they know the truth and thereby be able to rise to the full freedom of the children of God.

John 10, 3-5, 27. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 14, 23, 24. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings.

Here the position of the true disciple of Christ is clearly defined, being contrasted with that of one who does not keep the sayings of Christ. The distinguishing mark is clearly that of adhering with the utmost fidelity to the Word of the Lord.

John 18, 37. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every

one that is of the truth heareth My voice.

Matt. 28, 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

That is Christ's demand, addressed to those who would be His disciples in truth; that they teach all things, none excepted.

Acts 2, 42. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. *et.*

Gal. 1, 6-8. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Here is a very emphatic statement concerning those who left the purity of Christ's Gospel to turn to a doctrine which was more acceptable to the natural self-righteousness of man. A conscious, deliberate apostasy from the full truth is equal to a denial of the true Church.

Gal. 5, 9. (Cp. 1 Cor. 5, 6.) A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

The apostle here refers chiefly to the doctrine of the justification of sinners through the merits of Jesus Christ alone. It is the doctrine with which the true Church stands and falls. In fact, all religions and churches in the world may be divided into two groups, one which teaches salvation on the basis of Christ's vicarious atonement, and on that alone, and one which teaches salvation by man's works and efforts, no matter in what degree they are introduced.

1 Cor. 11, 24, 25. This do in remembrance of Me... This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

This clear statement of the institution of Christ has always been observed by the orthodox Church; one that sets aside its demand no longer may claim the title of true visible Church.

Matt. 28, 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Any church body or congregation not observing this word of institution or according to its official confessional stand repudiating the Triune God of Scripture, cannot be regarded as a part of the true visible Church.

B. Statement from the Confessions of the Church.

Note: The testimonies offered under the previous thesis, as well as those under the thesis next following, apply here. In most instances we find the contrast between the true and the false visible churches discussed side by side.

Smalcald Articles: Our churches are now, through God's grace, so enlightened and equipped with the pure Word and right use of the Sacraments, with knowledge of the various callings and of right works, that we on our part ask for no Council, and on such points have nothing better to hope or expect from a Council. (Preface of Martin

Number: Trigl. 45/1

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church

Luther: We know of no other Church than that which hears the voice of Christ and is baptized...The Gospel says that we should believe in Him and then love one another. (Exposition of the Gospel of John, 4, 1. St. Louis Ed., 7, 2129.)

Luther: What if I should prove that we have remained with the true old Church, that we are, indeed, the true old Church; but you have apostasized from us, as from the old Church, and have established a new church, against the old one?...No one can deny that we have the holy Sacrament of the Altar, and that just and precisely as Christ Himself instituted it, and afterwards the apostles and all Christendom used it...No one can deny that we have the true old keys, and that we do not use them but to bind and to absolve the sin...No one can deny that we have the ministry and the Word of God in pure form and in rich measure, that we diligently teach the Word and instruct people, without any addition of new, human doctrine, just as Christ has commanded and the whole Christian Church has ever done...By these points we have proved that we are the true old Church, one body with the entire holy Christian Church and the communion of saints. (Wider Hans Wurst, of 1541. St. Louis Ed., 17, 1322 ff.)

Luther: I see that it is necessary to address an admonition to those, whom Satan is now beginning to persecute. Among whom are a few who think that they may escape the perils, when they are attacked, by saying: I do not side with Luther, nor with any other person, but with the holy Gospel...Truly, such a confession profits them nothing, and it is equivalent to denying Christ. Therefore I beg them to be very careful.--It is true that, as you value your body and soul, you must not say: I am Lutheran, or I am papistical; for none of them has died for you, nor is any one your master, but Christ alone, and you should call yourself a Christian. But if you hold that the doctrine of Luther is evangelical, and that of the pope not evangelical, then you must not simply cast Luther aside; otherwise you will also cast aside his doctrine, which you acknowledge as the doctrine of Christ. But you must say thus: Whether Luther is a vessel or holy, that does not concern me; but his doctrine is not his own, rather that of Christ Himself. For you see that the tyrants planning merely to kill Luther, but they want to destroy the doctrine; and it is on account of the doctrine that they lay hands on you and ask you whether you are Lutheran. Here truly you must not speak with words weak as a reed, but you must freely confess Christ, whether Luther, Cletus, or George preached Him. You may set aside the person, but the doctrine you must confess. (Luther's Opinion Concerning the Sacrament under Both Forms, Against Carlstadt, of 1522. St. Louis Ed., 20, 91.)

Roemer: The Church in the wider sense of the term we distinguish as the true and the false. This distinction is not absolute, as though the true Church were alone the Church, the false not at all, but the distinction is relative. The true (visible) Church is that external church organization which teaches the Articles of Faith necessary for salvation in the pure form and administers the Sacraments correctly. (Rev. Lutheran Dogm., IV, 160.)

Pierpont: The local congregations and the larger church organizations that actually exist we divide into two classes, according to the position which they assume with regard to the Christian doctrine. It is the will and command of God that His Word should be preached and believed in His Church in all purity, without any admixture of human doctrines. Whosoever speaks in the Church of God is to speak not his own, but God's Word... Upon this divine ordinance is based the distinction between orthodox and heterodox churches. A church that closely adheres to the divine ordinance, in which the Word of God is taught in its purity and the Sacraments are administered according to the divine institution is, with full and proper justice, called an orthodox church. But a church which, in opposition to the divine ordinance, permits false doctrines in its midst, is properly called a heterodox church. (Christl. Dogmatik, III, 486 f.)

6.

Beside the true visible Church there are many church bodies, local and otherwise, to whom the name "Christian" cannot be denied, which however, in spite of the confessional basis of Christianity professed by them, have left the doctrine taught in the Word of God in one or more points and persist in their errors, thus becoming separate denominations or sects. Every Christian is under obligation to shun all heterodox congregations and all sects, and to adhere to the Church of the pure Word and confession alone.

Note: It was formerly a great deal easier to point out distinctive doctrines on the basis of confessions accepted by certain large church bodies or even groups of bodies. At the present time, however, there are so many shades of opinion not only in a group known by the same general designation, as Baptist, Methodist, Congregationalist, Christian, etc., but even within the individual organization accepted as a subdivision of the larger group, that we are compelled to inquire into the confessional stand of practically every congregation and every pastor, unless the pledge required at the reception of new members really stands for a doctrinal position. Besides, the division of pastors and congregations in the same church body characterized by the designations Liberalists, Modernists, Fundamentalists, Higher Fundamentalists has caused great confusion. Hence the wording adopted in the proposition above.

A. Proof from Scripture.

John 8, 31, 32. If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

This statement gives the criterion, according to which we may judge the discipleship of any one who calls himself a disciple of Christ, a true Christian. He who leaves the Word of Christ, the Gospel, in any point that is clearly taught, cannot lay claim to being a member of the true visible Church but belongs to a false church; if, indeed, he is not entirely outside of the Church.

Acts 20, 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

That is one way in which heresies and schisms usually arise, because men within the Church begin to speak things, to teach doctrines, which are not in agreement with the pure teaching of Christ's Word.

Matt. 7, 15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Note that these men are called false prophets. They pretend to be teachers of the Church; they offer their doctrines. But their doctrines are false, and all their show of righteousness in doctrine and life is for the purposes of deceit. And a usual characteristic is that they come without being called; they insinuate themselves into fields which are taken care of by properly called men.

Matt. 24, 23, 24. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Cp. Deut. 13, 1-5.)

Rom. 16, 17, 18. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

1 John 1, 6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie.

1 John 2, 4. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar.

1 John 4, 1, 3. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Every false teacher partakes of the nature of the Antichrist, is, in fact, one of the antichrists, a teacher who places himself in opposition to Christ and His Word.

2 John, 10, 11. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Titus 3, 10. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

The apostle clearly has in mind such as become addicted to false doctrine while in outward membership with the Church, for otherwise the admonition would have no basis. Such people become heretics, or heterodox.

1 Cor. 11, 19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

1 Cor. 1, 10, 11. For I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you. For it hath been declared unto me of you, brethren, that there are contentions among you.

According to chap. 11, 18, the apostle evidently has reference to the same unfortunate condition, namely a spirit of contention and divisiveness, without a proper reason for such separation. People who create divisions on account of external matters, things indifferent, usages and customs which are not in themselves confessional in nature (though often doctrine may be involved either at the beginning or later), are called separatists in the evil sense, or schismatics.

2 Cor. 6, 14, 17, 18. What communion hath light with darkness?... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1 Tim. 6, 3-5. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doing about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself.

Gal. 5, 9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Book of Concord. Preface: As to the condemnations, censures, and rejections of Godless doctrines, and especially of that which has arisen concerning the Lord's Supper, these indeed had to be set forth in this our declaration and thorough explanation and decision of controverted articles, not only that all should guard against these condemned articles, but also for certain other reasons could in no way have been passed by. Thus as it is no way our design and purpose to condemn those men who err from a certain simplicity of mind, but are not blasphemers against the truth of the heavenly doctrine, much less, indeed, entire churches... nay, rather has it been our intention and disposition in this manner openly to censure and condemn only the fanatical opinions and their obstinate and blasphemous teachers, (which, we judge, should in no way be tolerated in our dominions, churches, and schools,) because these errors conflict with the express Word of God, and that, too, in such a way that they cannot be reconciled with it... For we have no doubt whatever that even in those churches which have hitherto not agreed with us in all things many godly and by no means wicked men are found who follow their own simplicity but in no way approve the blasphemies which are cast forth against the Holy Supper as it is administered in our churches, according to Christ's institution, and, with the unanimous approval of all good men, is taught in accordance with the words of the testament itself. We are also in great hope that, if they would be taught aright concerning these things, the Spirit of the Lord aiding them, they would agree with us, and with our churches and schools, to the infallible truth of God's Word. (Trigl., 19.)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Although wolves and wicked teachers become rampant in the Church, yet they are not properly the kingdom of Christ. (Art. VII. Trigl., 255.)

Note: Here the Lutheran Church confesses that the heretics and false teachers sow their wicked seed within the Church, not outside of it; whence it follows that there are certainly members of the true, the invisible Church in the midst of organizations shepherded by false prophets, as long as the Word of God is truly in use and its fundamental doctrines are not distorted beyond recognition or entirely denied.

Apology: In the Church itself, infinite is the multitude of the wicked who oppress it...For this reason the true teaching and the Church are often so utterly suppressed and disappear, as if there were no Church, which has happened under the papacy; if often seems that the Church has completely perished. (Art. VII. Trigl., 229.)

Apology: Nor indeed do we find fault with all; for we are of the opinion that there are here and there some good men in the monasteries who judge moderately concerning human and factitious services, as some writers call them, and who do not approve of the cruelty which the hypocrites among them exercise. (Art. XXVII. Trigl., 421.)

Apology: Impious teachers are to be deserted (are not to be received or heard), because these do not act any longer in the place of Christ, but are antichrists. And Christ says Matt. 7, 15: Beware of false prophets. And Paul, Gal. 1, 9: If any man preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed. (Art. VIII. Trigl., 245.)

Smalcald Articles: In the third place, this must be added: Even though the bishop of Rome had the primacy and superiority by divine right, nevertheless obedience would not be due those pontiffs who defend godless services, idolatry, and doctrine conflicting with the Gospel. Nay; such pontiffs and such a government ought to be held accursed, as Paul clearly teaches, Gal. 1, 8. (Of the Power of Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 515.)

Smalcald Articles: This being the case, all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt. 7, 15: Beware of false prophets. And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated as cursed, Gal. 1, 8; Titus 3, 10. And 2 Cor. 6, 14 he says: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion hath light with darkness? To dissent from the agreement of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a grave matter. But divine authority commands all not to be allies and defenders of impiety and unjust cruelty. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 517.)

Formula of Concord: In like manner, too, such ceremonies should not be reckoned among the genuine free adiaaphera, or matters of indifference, as make a show or feign the appearance, as though our religion and that of the Papists were not far apart, thus to avoid persecution, or as though the latter were not at least highly offensive to us; or when such ceremonies are designed for the purpose, and required and received in this sense, as though by and

through them both contrary religions were reconciled and became one body; or when a reentering into the Papacy and a departure from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and true religion should occur or gradually follow therefrom (when there is danger lest we seem to have reentered the Papacy, and to have departed, or to be on the point of departing gradually, from the pure doctrine of the Gospel). For in this case what Paul writes, 2 Cor. 6, 14, 17, shall and must obtain: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. (Thorough Decl., X. Of Church Rites. Trigl., 1055.)

Formula of Concord: And because directly after the times of the apostles, and even while they were still living, false teachers and heretics arose, and symbols, i.e., brief, succinct (categorical) confessions, were composed against them in the early Church, which were regarded as the unanimous, universal Christian faith and confession of the orthodox and true Church, namely, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, we pledge ourselves to them, and hereby reject all heresies and dogmas which, contrary to them, have been introduced into the Church of God... In the third place, since in these last times God, out of especial grace, has brought the truth of His Word to light again from the darkness of the Papacy through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther, and since this doctrine has been collected from, and according to, God's Word into the articles and chapters of the Augsburg Confession against the corruptions of the Papacy and also of other sects, we confess also the First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession as our symbol for this time, not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been taken from God's Word and is founded firmly and well therein, precisely in the form in which it was committed to writing in the year 1530, and presented to the Emperor Charles V at Augsburg by some Christian Electors, Princes, and Estates of the Roman Empire as a common confession of the reformed churches, (Those following Luther in his work of reforming the Church.) whereby our reformed churches are distinguished from the Papists and other repudiated and condemned sects and heresies, after the custom and usage of the early Church, whereby succeeding councils, Christian bishops and teachers appealed to the Nicene Creed, and confessed it. (Comprehensive Summary, Trigl., 777.849 f.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Augustine: Through carnal darkness some, also of good will, have remained for a longer time in that dissension, even after the fury of the evil-minded against the Church of God had become indubitably evident. (De Unit. Eccl. c. 20. Walther, Kirche und Amt, III, note.)

Hilarius: The ears of the people are holier than the hearts of the priests... so that the people of Christ does not die now under the priests of the Antichrist... They hear that Christ is God: they believe it is true what is said. They hear of the Son of God: they believe that, while God is become incarnate He nevertheless is true God. They hear that Christ was before all time: they believe that this "before the times" is what always exists. (Lib. adv. Auxentium. Walther, I. c., 112, note.)

Chrysostom: Not he goes out from the Church, who goes out according to the body, but he who in spirit leaves the foundations of the ecclesiastical truth. (Hom. 43 in Matth., Walther, L.c., 113, note.)

Ignatius of Antioch: I beseech you, therefore (yet not I but the love of Jesus Christ): Live only on Christian fare, and refrain from strange food, which is heresy. For these men (the heretics) mingle Jesus Christ with themselves in specious honesty, mixing as it were a deadly poison with honeyed wine, which the ignorant takes gladly in his baneful pleasure, and it is his death. Beware therefore of such men; and this will be possible for you, if you are not puffed up, and are not separated from God, from Jesus Christ, and from the bishop, and from the ordinances of the apostles.

Ignatius: For there are some who make a practise of carrying about the Name with wicked guile, and do certain other things unworthy of God; these you must shun as wild beasts, for they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly, and you must be on your guard against them, for they are scarcely to be cured. (To the Ephesians. Op.cit., 181.)

Ignatius: Therefore as children of the light of truth flee from division and wrong doctrine. And follow as sheep where the Shepherd is. For there are many specious wolves who lead captive with evil pleasures the runners in God's race, but they will find no place if you are in unity...Be not deceived, my brethren, if any one follow a maker of schism, he does not inherit the kingdom of God; if any one walk in strange doctrine he has no part in the Passion. (To the Philadelphians. Op.cit., 241 f.)

Ignatius: Now I warn you of these things, beloved, knowing that you also are so minded. But I guard you in advance against beasts in the form of men, whom you must not only not receive, but if it is possible not even meet, but only pray for them, that they may repent...They abstain from Eucharist and prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ who suffered for our sins, which the Father raised up by His goodness. They then who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes; but it were better for them to have love, that they also may attain to the resurrection. It is right to refrain from such men and not even to speak about them in private or in public, but to give heed to the prophets and especially to the Gospel...But flee from divisions as the beginning of evils. (To the Smyrnaeans. Op.cit., 255, 259.)

Ignatius: Let no man be deceived: unless a man be within the sanctuary he lacks the bread of God, for if the prayer of one or two has such might, how much more has that of the bishop and of the whole Church? So then he who does not join in the common assembly is already haughty, and has separated himself. (To the Ephesians. Op.cit., 179.)

Ignatius: Do not attempt to make anything appear right for you by yourselves, but let there be in common one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope in love, in the joy which is without fault, that is Jesus Christ, than whom there is nothing better. Hasten all to come together as to one temple of God, as to one altar, to

one Jesus Christ, who came forth from the one Father, and is with one, and departed to one. Be not led astray by strange doctrines or by old fables, which are profitless. (To the Magnesians. Op. Cit., 203 f.)

Augustine: All those certainly who go out from the Church and are cut off from the unity of the Church are antichrists; no one doubts this, for he himself (the apostle John) has so designated them: "They went out from us, but they are not of us... Every one who denies that Jesus is the Christ is an antichrist." Let us therefore now ask who denies this, and at the same time look not on the tongue, but on the deeds. Stay now for a little the tongue; ask the life... He is emphatically a lying antichrist who confesses with the mouth that Jesus is the Christ, and denies it by his works... Whatsoever is contrary to the Word of Christ, is in the Antichrist. For the Antichrist is opposed to Christ. (Expos. ep. I. Joh. Walther, Kirche und Amt, 141ff., note.)

Irenaeus: In the Church God has placed the apostles, the prophets, the teachers, and the entire other operation of the Spirit, of which all those are not partakers who do not gather in the Church, but they defraud themselves of life by their evil opinion and their extremely evil works. (Lib. 3, c. 40. Walther, L. c., 160.)

Luther: Christ will have His baptismal font, His pulpit from which He teaches, His apostles and teachers in cities and villages, even if there should be only one or two there that believe... Thus there have always been some believers, even under the papacy, and of these there are still some there, whom we do not know, whom God preserves by the Word and the Sacraments, although the devil and the pope do not like to see it. (Expos. of Ps. 45, 17. St. Louis, Ed., 5, 468.)

Luther: The Christian Church is not only under the Roman Church or the pope, but in all the world, as the prophets have announced that the Gospel of Christ should go forth into all the world. Ps. 2, 8; 19, 5. So that the Christian Church is, according to the bodies, scattered everywhere under pope, Mohammedans, Persians, Tartars; but is assembled spiritually, in one Gospel and faith, under one Head, namely Jesus Christ. (Great Confession of the Lord's Supper, of the year 1528. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1101.)

Luther: Augustine adduces this passage (Ps. 19, 5) against the Donatists, who confined the Church to a small corner in Africa; but it should rather be used against our non-Donatists who say that there are no believers in India and Persia and Asia. For where the sound and the words of the Spirit are to be found, there without doubt is the true Church of Christ. For the Spirit of Christ speaks only in His Church. For that reason, since we here have a clear text that the sound of the apostles is gone forth into all lands, and one does not read that this has been recanted, therefore we must beware lest, with the impious Donatists, whether they be these or those, we boast of ourselves alone as believers, although we may be anything but believers, since we nowhere hear the Word and the sound of the apostles. (Expos. of the Psalms of 1521. St. Louis Ed., 4, 1136.)

10thly: Therefore the Church is holy, and where the anthu-
sists are in charge, is holy only so long as God's Word and the
Sacraments. For where these are denied, there can be no Church.
Therefore a holy Church is everywhere in that place, where the Word
and the Sacraments remain in their substance, in spite of the fact
that the Antichrist may be ruling there, who, as the Scripture testi-
fies, is sitting, not in a stable of devils, not in a pig-sty, nor
among an assembly of unbelievers, but in the most noble and holy
place, namely in the temple of God. Therefore the temple of God
must also be where the spiritual tyrants are ruling, and must be pre-
served under them. Therefore we answer this question in brief, that
in the whole world the Church is in all places where the Gospel and
the Sacraments are. (Large Exposition of Galatians. St. Louis Ed., 9, 44.)

Luther: We are constrained to confess that the enthusiasts (Schwärmer: Anabaptists) have the Scripture and the Word of God in other articles, and whosoever hears it from them and believes will be saved, although they are unholy heretics and blasphemers of Christ. (Letter to Two Pastors on the Anabaptists, of 1528. St. Louis Ed., 17, 2212.)

Luther: Very well, no Christian should and can pray for the enthusiasts, nor be concerned about them. They are delivered and sin unto death (as St. John says). I speak of the masters (teachers); may the good Lord Jesus help the lay people among them against such murderers of souls. (Short Confession of the Holy Sacrament. St. Louis: EC., 20, 1771.)

Butler! With your policy of silence and palliation you put yourself under suspicion; but if you believe as you express yourself before me, then speak out along the same lines also in the church, in lessons, sermons, and private conversations, and strengthen your brethren and assist those who are in error to regain the right way and expose the mischievous spirits; otherwise your confession is a mere mark and has no value. Whoever regards his doctrine, faith, and confession as true, right, and certain, cannot stand in the same stall with others who spread false doctrine or are in agreement with it; nor can he always deal in gentle words with the devil and his ilk. A teacher who is silent concerning the errors and yet desires to be a true teacher is worse than an outspoken enthusiast... or he is altogether uncertain in his own mind and not worthy to be called a pupil, much less a teacher, for he does not want to provoke any one nor speak a word in Christ's favor nor hurt the devil and the world. (Conversation with Dr. Georg Mejer. St. Louis Ed., 17, 1179 f.)

Luther: Therefore this passage (Gal. 5,9) is to be remembered well against this argument of theirs, with which they defame us, that we violate Christian love to the great detriment of the Church. We are certainly ready to remain at peace with all and to show them love, if they but permit us to keep the doctrine of faith complete and inviolate. If we cannot obtain this, then they demand love from us in vain. Cannot he who loves which is maintained to detriment of the doctrine of faith as which all must yield love, apostle, speak from his heart? Certainly not; for he will let those boast greatly of having the Christian love; as on our part want to praise the glory of the word and of faith. Love may under circumstances be neglected without danger, but the word and faith not in the same manner.

It is the duty of love to suffer all, to yield to all. On the other hand it is the obligation of faith to suffer nothing, to yield to nothing. Where matters of salvation are concerned, if enthusiasts teach lies and error with a show of truth and thus deceive many, there most certainly love must not be permitted to rule, nor error be condoned. For here it is not a benefit shown to an ungrateful person that is lost, but we lose the Word, faith, Christ, eternal life, etc. Therefore, if thou deniest God in one article, thou hast denied Him in all, because God is not divided into many articles, but everything is in every single article, and One is in all articles. (Large Exposition to Galatians. St. Louis Ed., 9.645 ff.)

Luther: They say that peace ought to be kept, and yet themselves do not refrain from increasing warfare, as every one sees and hears. Also, they say that it is a small matter. Here they become martyrs and saints. Very well, because they are so very wicked and make a mockery of all the world, I want to apply a Lutheran warning, and say thus: Cursed be such love and unity to the bottom of hell, because such unity not only divides Christianity in such a lamentable way, but in addition, in a devilish manner, makes mockery and foolishness of its misery. No, my dear sirs, none of such peace and love for me. If I had murdered some one's father and mother, wife and child, and would want to murder him also, and then say: Keep peace, dear friend, we want to love each other, the matter is not so important that we ought to be divided on the question; what would he say to me? Oh how dearly he would love me! Thus, the enthusiasts murder Christ, my Lord, and God the Father in His words, also my mother, the Christian Church, together with my brothers, and would also like to see me dead, and yet they say I should keep the peace, they want to cultivate the virtue of love toward me. But I want to expose the enthusiasts, so that every one may see what kind of spirit has taken possession of them, in order that those who adhere to them may find out whom they believe and follow. (On the Words: This is My Body, This is My Blood, Against the Enthusiasts. St. Louis Ed., 20.773 ff.)

Luther: I see that it is necessary to address an earnest admonition to those whom Satan now begins to persecute. Among whom are some who are of the opinion that they may escape the danger of being attacked by saying: I do not side with that man Luther, nor with any person, but with the holy Gospel, or with the holy Church or the Roman Church, in order that they be left undisturbed, and yet they, in their hearts, consider my doctrine as evangelical and adhere to it. Truly, such confession does not help them, and it is the same as if they deny Christ. Therefore I pray that these people take good heed. It is true, as you value body and soul, you must not say: I am of Luther, or of the pope; for none of these died for you, nor is either your master, but Christ alone, and you should confess yourself a Christian. But if you firmly regard Luther's doctrine as evangelical and that of the pope as not evangelical, you may not simply discard Luther, otherwise you will also discard his doctrine which you regard as the doctrine of Christ. But you ought to speak thus: Whether Luther is a rogue or a saint does not concern me; but his doctrine is not his own, it is the doctrine of Christ. For you see that the tyrants are not merely planning to destroy Luther, but they desire to destroy the doctrine; and it concerning the doctrine that they attack you, asking you whether

the Lutheran. Here you must certainly not speak with weak words, but confess Christ freely, whether it is Luther, Claus, or George who has proclaimed Him. The person you may disregard; but the doctrine you must confess.--Thus St. Paul also writes to Timothy, 2 Tim. 1, 8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." If it would have been sufficient for Timothy to confess the Gospel, Paul would not have commanded him not to be ashamed of him; not of the person of Paul, but of him who was bound for the sake of the Gospel. If Timothy had said: I do not side with Paul or with Peter, but with Christ, although he knew that Peter and Paul were teaching Christ, he would thereby have denied Christ Himself. For Christ says, Matt. 10, 40: of those who preach Him: "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me; He that despiseth you, despiseth Me." (Luke 10, 16.) Why so? Because they thus regard His messengers, who bring His Word, therefore it is the same as if He Himself and His Word were so regarded. (Luther's Opinion of the Two Forms in the Sacrament, St. Louis Ed., 20, 90 ff.)

Luther: This article (of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament) is not a doctrine or statement outside of Scripture, invented by men, but it is clearly founded and established in the Gospel by clear, pure, undisputed words of Christ, and believed and maintained from the beginning of the Christian Church in the whole world to this hour, as the books and writings of the fathers show, in both the Greek and the Latin language, and in addition the daily use and work in experience, to this hour. Which testimony of the entire holy Christian Church (if we had nothing more) ought to be sufficient reason for us to remain with this article, and not to hear or to suffer a sectarian spirit. (Luther's Letter against Certain Sectarian Spirits, April, 1532, St. Louis Ed., 20, 1684.)

Johann Gerhard: It is to be noted that there are certain degrees of purity, because the Word of God in the Church is sometimes preached with greater, sometimes with less purity, and she does not immediately cease to be a Church, even if she should not teach purely in some chief points of the Christian religion. The more purely and sincerely therefore the Word of God is taught in a church, the nearer the preaching and the doctrine comes to the norm of Holy Scripture, the purer and more sincere will be the church; but the farther she diverges from the norm of the Word, the more impure and corrupt will be the state of that church. (Loc. de eccl., # 126, Walther, L. c., 101 f., note.)

Johann Gerhard: If Baptism and some chief points of doctrine are preserved unutilated, then God, even in the corrupt condition of the visible Church, yea, in the midst of the congregation of heretics, by those means gathers an invisible Church of the elect. (Loc. de eccl., # 141, Walther, L. c., 104, note.)

Martin Chemnitz: Because the doctrine is the chief part of the ministry, therefore it is true, if the true doctrine is falsified and impious opinions are set up, that the ministry itself is changed, and that the ministry of such as falsify the doctrine is to be rejected, because it is wicked: "Beware of false prophets," also: "The voice of strangers they hear not, but flee therefrom." (Ex. Council, Trid., p. 237, Walther, L. c., 128, note.)

E. Balduin: The receiving of the Sacrament is a sign of the

confession and of the doctrine; whosoever, therefore, does not acknowledge the doctrine of the church, in which he wants to use the Sacrament, as true, also cannot with a good conscience take the Sacrament in this church. (Tract.de cas. conse. Walther.L.c., 139, note.)

Melanchthon: We should know that there must be a public office of the Gospel and public assemblies (congregations), as is stated Eph.4. And this assembly we should join; of this visible assembly we should be citizens and members. (Loc.theol., ed. 1552. Walther, L.c., 150, note.) p. 150

The spiritual inheritance of all believers is based upon, and the result of, all the gifts and blessings which were gained for mankind through the vicarious death of Christ, and are actually applied to every Christian by faith: forgiveness of sins, peace with God, access to the Father, membership in the Body of Christ.

A. Proof from Scripture.

1 Cor. 1, 5-7. That in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ is confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here the giving of spiritual gifts is clearly associated with the vicarious work of Christ, as it is offered in the Gospel, every individual Christian being included in the number of those who are partakers of these blessings and benefits.

Rom. 6, 3. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

The apostle speaks of becoming Christ's own, of being most intimately associated with Him in the fellowship of all His work, so that every believer is a partaker of both Christ's death and of His resurrection.

Luke 1, 77. To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins.

Acts 10, 43. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.

Acts 26, 18. To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.

Eph. 1, 7. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

In these four passages the special gift of the forgiveness or remission of sins, prepared by Christ for all men through His vicarious atonement, is clearly applied to all believers. Each and every believer has received this promise and enjoys the blessing of this forgiveness.

Matt. 9, 2, 6. Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee...The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.

It is this application of the remission of sins to every Christian that is the characteristic feature of Christianity.

Note: In proposition 5 the truths here set forth were spoken of in a general way, as the body of Christ, invisibly included in the church as a corporate organization; here the purpose is to emphasize the blessings, and therefore also the responsibility, attaching to the individual.

Isa. 53,5. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

Rom. 5,1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Col. 3,15. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

1 Pet. 5,14. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus.

These four passages give the assurance of the same fact, namely that all believers, and every believer, is by faith in possession of the peace of God and thus in a position to appear before the face of God as a spiritual priest.

Rom. 5,2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.

Eph. 2,18. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Eph. 3,12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.

These three passages show that the wall of partition erected by our sins has been removed by the work of Christ, and that, by the Spirit, by faith, we have access to the Father, to the very throne of grace.

1 Cor. 12,27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Rom. 12,4,5. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Eph. 5,30. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

As members of the body of Christ, we are in the most intimate fellowship with Christ, who, in turn, is in the same intimate fellowship with His Father. In our spiritual priesthood we are thus nearer to God than any priest of the Old Testament. And it is every believer that enjoys this privilege.

Job 19,25. I know that my Redeemer liveth.

Isa. 45,24. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.

Song of Sol., 8,16. My Beloved is mine, and I am His.

John 20,28. Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.

Gal. 2,20. The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

In these five passages the special feature that faith is an individual thing, that it applies the blessings of Christ to the believer, that he is the possessor of the blessings of the spiritual priesthood, is brought out very strongly. These blessings are, properly speaking, the basis of such spiritual priesthood.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Apology: This faith brings to God, not confidence in one's own merits, but only confidence in the promise, or the mercy promised in Christ. This special faith, therefore, by which an individual believes that for Christ's sake his sins are remitted him, and that for Christ's sake God is reconciled and propitious, obtains remission of sins and justifies us. (Art. IV. Trigl., 133.)

Apology. To believe means to rely on the mercy of God, that He desires to be gracious for Christ's sake, without our merits. That is what it means to believe the article of the forgiveness of sin. (Art. III. Trigl., 207.)

Apology: The terrors of sin are overcome by faith alone, that only Christ, the Mediator, is to be presented by faith against the wrath and judgment of God. If any one think differently, he does not give Christ due honor, who has been set forth that He might be a Propitiator, that through Him we might have access to the Father. (Art. III. Trigl., 179.)

Apology: This is the true and simple and clear statement of Paul, in which the greatest consolation is set forth for pious consciences and the glory of Christ is illustrated, who certainly is given to us for that purpose, that through Him we might have grace, righteousness, and peace. (Art. III, Latin text. Trigl., 202.)

Apology: By faith alone we obtain remission of sins, when we comfort our hearts with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake. Likewise Paul, Rom. 5. 2, says: By whom also we have access, and adds, by faith. Thus, therefore, we are reconciled to the Father, and receive remission of sins, when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake. (Art. IV. Trigl., 143.)

Large Catechism: I am also a part and member of the same (congregation of saints), a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost by having heard and continuing to hear the Word of God, which is the beginning of entering it. (The Creed, Art. III. Trigl., 691.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: Therefore all Christian believers are the holy and spiritual priesthood, who are built upon this Rock. For since Christ is the Bridegroom, and we the bride, therefore the bride has everything that the Bridegroom has, also His own body. (Sermon on 1 Pet. 2,5. St. Louis Ed., 9, 1175. Op. 1013.)

Luther: The Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament, where figures are no longer employed, does not write of more than of one spiritual priesthood...The Scripture makes us all priests on the same level, as has been said. (Answer to the Super-Christian Book of Emser. St. Louis Ed., 18, 1281 f.)

Luther: For this reason the Holy Ghost in the New Testament purposely prevented the name sacerdos, priest, from being given even to an apostle or to any other office, but it is the name of the baptized or the Christians alone, as a name which is innate and inherited by Baptism, for none of us in Holy Baptism is born an apostle, preacher, teacher, pastor, but we are born as priests. (Of the Secret Mass and Ordination of Priests. St. Louis Ed., 19, 1260.)

F. Pieper: According to the Scripture all those in whom the Holy Ghost works by faith in Christ, viz. all Christians, but they alone, are given the name "geistlicher Stand" or "Geistliche" (spiritual). (Christl. Dogmatik, III, 521.)

8.

All Christians, as spiritual kings and priests before God and the Father, are to exercise the rights and duties of this priesthood, particularly in carrying out the provisions of the Great Commission.

A. Proof from Scripture.

1 Pet. 2,9. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Rev. 1,6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

Rev. 5,10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.

These passages are the charter of the Christians; they assure all believers of their high position in the eyes of God, each and every one of them being invested with the rights of the great spiritual priesthood.

Matt. 28,19,20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Matt. 28,19. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

These two passages contain the so-called Great Commission of

the Lord, words which are addressed to all believers, every one of whom is to be active in fulfilling this great obligation of the spiritual priesthood.

1 Pet. 4, 10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Rom. 12, 6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.

1 Cor. 12, 7. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

These texts plainly show that every believer has received some special gift of grace through the power of the Holy Ghost, which he, as a spiritual priest, is to use for the best interests to the kingdom of God.

Matt. 18, 17. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican

This is the final step in the formal discipline of the congregation, and the Lord places the responsibility in connection with this step upon the individual.

1 John 4, 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Acts 17, 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

The duty of trying the spirits, of testing the preaching of the Word of God by a constant comparison with the inspired account, is a duty which is laid upon all Christians, a responsibility which they may not shrink.

Gen. 18, 19. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

Eph. 6, 4. Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2 Tim. 1, 5; 3, 15. When I call to remembrance the unfained faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice... And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.

Col. 3, 16. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

The Lord creates every Christian home to have its family altar, where the children and all members of the household may be instructed in the Word of God. Every Christian also, should use the Word of God for purposes of admonition and encouragement.

Jan 14/60

1 Pet. 2,5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Rom. 12,1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Phil. 2,17. If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

Hebr. 13,16. But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Thus the whole life of the Christians is to be an expression of their spiritual priesthood. But it should be noted throughout that these various functions are never to interfere with the regular office of the ministry, as instituted by the Lord. Where, according to God's institution, a Christian congregation exists, there the office of the ministry is to be established, to take care of the public functions of the ministry, the official acts performed in the name of all. But this special office is to be considered in a special section of this monograph.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Formula of Concord: This righteousness is offered us by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel and in the Sacraments, and is applied, appropriated, and received through faith, whence believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, the grace of God, sonship, and heirship of eternal life. (Thorough Declaration, Art. III. Trigl., 931.)

Formula of Concord: Fruits of the Spirit are the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and which are done by believers so far as they are regenerate (spontaneously and freely), as though they knew of no command, threat, or reward; for in this manner the children of God live in the Law and walk according to the Law of God, which (mode of living) St. Paul in his epistles calls the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind, Rom. 7, 25; 8, 7; 8, 2; Gal. 6, 2. (Epitome, Art. VI. Trigl., 307.)

Apology: Therefore, because of God's will, our bodies ought to be sacrifices, to declare our obedience (and patience), and not to compensate for eternal death, for which God has another price, namely, the death of His own Son. (Art. VI. Trigl., 303.)

Apology: Of the mortification of the flesh and discipline of the body we thus teach, just as the Confession states, that a true and not a feigned mortification occurs through the cross and afflictions by which God exercises us. In these we must obey God's will, as Paul says, Rom. 12, 1: Present your bodies a living sacrifice. And these are the spiritual exercises of fear and faith. But in addition to this mortification which occurs through the cross (which does not depend upon our will) there is also a voluntary kind of exercise necessary, of which Luther says, Luke 21, 34: Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your bodies be overcharged with surfeiting. And Paul, 1 Cor. 9, 27: I keep under my body, and bring it into

subjection, etc. And these exercises are to be undertaken not because they are services that justify, but in order to curb the flesh, lest satiety overpower us, and render us secure and indifferent, the result of which is that men indulge and obey the dispositions of the flesh. This diligence ought to be perpetual, because it has the perpetual command of God. (Art. XV. Trigl., 327.)

Smalcald Articles: The Pope exercises a twofold tyranny: he defends his errors by force and by murders, and forbids judicial examination. The latter does even more injury than any executions, because, when the true judgment of the Church is removed, godless dogmas and godless services cannot be removed, and for many ages they destroy innumerable souls. Therefore let the godly consider the great errors of the kingdom of the Pope and his tyranny, and let them ponder, first, that the errors must be rejected and the true doctrine embraced, for the glory of God and to the salvation of souls. Then let them ponder also how great a crime it is to aid unjust cruelty in killing saints, whose blood God will undoubtedly avenge...But since the decisions of Synods are the decisions of the Church, and not of the Pope, ...and as the rest of the Christians must censure all other errors of the Pope, so they must also rebuke the Pope when he evades and impedes the true investigation and true decision of the Church. (Of the Power...of the Pope. Trigl., 519 f.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Tertullian: Do you not believe that every Christian has permission to plan and to establish what is in accordance with God, what is conducive to discipline, what promotes salvation? (De coronat.; Walther, Kirche und Amt, 423, note.)

Luther: But let us continue and prove the same (namely that all Christians are priests) from the priestly offices, as they call it, that all Christians in the same way are priests, for these passages, 1 Pet. 2, 9: "Ye are a royal priesthood," and Rev. 5, 10: "Thou hast made us to be kings and priests unto our God." I have adduced sufficiently in other books. But these are approximately all the priestly offices: to teach, to preach, and to proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to bless or to administer the Sacrament of the Altar, to bind and to loosen from sins, to pray for others, to sacrifice, and to judge concerning the doctrine and the spirit of others. Truly these are powerful and royal prerogatives. (How Ministers of the Church Should Be Chosen. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1572.)

Luther: If they were now compelled to admit that we all, as many as have been baptized, are likewise priests, as in truth we are, and that the ministry alone is committed to them, but with our consent, then they would know, at the same time, that they have no right to rule over us, except to the extent that we of our own free will would agree. It is written, 1 Pet. 2, 9: "Ye are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, --and the priestly nation." Therefore we are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. But those whom we call priests are ministers (servants), chosen of our number, who are to perform all offices in our name. And the priesthood is nothing but a service (ministry). For it is stated, 1 Cor. 4, 2: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." (Of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. St. Louis Ed., 10, 116 f.)

Luther: We finally insist upon this, that there is no other word of God than that alone which is commanded to all Christians to proclaim; that there is no other Baptism than that which all Christians may administer; that there is no other commemoration of the Lord's Supper than that committed to every Christian, which Christ has instituted for observance; also that there is no other sin but that which every Christian may bind and loosen; also that there is no sacrifice but the body of every Christian; also that no one can and may pray but only the Christian; in addition that no one should judge concerning the doctrine but only the Christian. But these are truly the priestly and royal offices. (How Ministers Should Be Chosen. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1590.)

Luther: These three offices He has given to us all. Because He is priest, and we are His brethren, therefore all Christians have power and command to preach and to proclaim God's mercy and attributes, etc.; and to step before God, in order that one might pray for the other and sacrifice himself to God; yet, as St. Paul says, that everything be done in order, that not every one teach in the congregation and administer the holy Sacraments, but only those who have been called by the congregation and to whom the ministry is committed; the others should hear it in silence, etc. (Sermon on 1 Pet. 2, 5. St. Louis Ed., 9, 1173.)

Luther: Here you see clearly who has the right to judge the doctrine. Bishops, the Pope, the learned, and every one has the power to teach; but the sheep are to judge whether they teach the voice of Christ or the voice of strangers. (That a Christian Congregation Has Power and Authority to Judge All Doctrine. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1541.)

Luther: This is the call of the public office among the Christians. If one should come into an assembly where there are no Christians, one might do as the apostles did, and not wait for a call... If one should say: Here are no Christians; I want to preach and instruct them concerning the Christian faith, and then a company should gather and choose and call me as their bishop, then I should have a call. (Sermon on Lk. 9, 1. St. Louis Ed., 9, 738.)

Luther: Now you say: How is this? If he is not called, he may not preach, as you yourself have so often taught. Answer: Here you must place the Christian in two places. In the first place, if he is in a locality where there are no Christians, he requires no other call but that he is a Christian, called and anointed by God by an inner call; there he owes it to the crying heathen and non-Christians to preach and to teach the Gospel from the duty of Christian love, even though no man call him for that purpose... For in such a case a Christian, for brotherly love, looks upon the needs of the poor corrupt souls and does not wait whether he be given a command or a letter from princes or bishops; for need breaks all laws and has no law; therefore love is under obligation to help where there is no one else who does help, or should help... In the second place, if he is in a locality with other Christians who have the same power and authority with him, he should not proceed upon power of himself, but he should let himself be called and placed at the head, in order that he may preach and teach in the stead and by the commission of the others. (That a Christian Congregation Has Power and Authority

etc. St. Louis Ed., 10, 2244.)

Luther: If we have become Christians through this Priest and his priesthood and by Baptism through faith have become his members, we also derive the right and the power to teach and to confess before every one the Word which we have from him, every one according to his call and station. For though we are not all in a public office and call, yet every Christian may and should teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, rebuke his neighbor through the Word of God, where and when one is in need of it; as, father and mother their children and servants, a brother, neighbor, citizen, or farmer the other. For a Christian may well instruct and admonish some other person, who is as yet without knowledge and weak, in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, prayer, etc., and he who so hears is under obligation to accept this as the Word of God and join in public confession.--Thus the Christians also have and exercise their priestly office, not in order to gain forgiveness of sins for themselves or others; for that they have solely through Christ's sacrifice, which alone has value for the reconciliation of all men; but such sacrifices wherewith they laud and praise God. These are the sacrifices of which St. Paul says Rom. 12, 1: I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service...And these are the true sacrifices that please God and are a sweet savor. For they are offered to the praise and honor of God, and as a good example to other people. (On Ps. 110, 4. St. Louis Ed., 3, 1053 f.)

Luther: For it would be far safer and more beneficial (namely than submitting to papal authority) that every housefather read the Gospel at home. And since the opinion and usage of the whole world by common consent permits laymen to baptize, my advice would be that fathers to whom children are born should baptize these themselves and thus, according to the doctrine of Christ, govern themselves and those entrusted to them, even though they do not receive the Lord's Supper all their lives. For the Sacrament of the Altar is not absolutely necessary for salvation; but the Gospel and Baptism alone are sufficient in themselves, because faith alone sanctifies and love alone lives properly. (How Ministers Are to Be Elected and Commissioned. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1557.)

Luther: Answering the question which your good friend...has presented to you in writing and desires to have brought to my attention, this is my answer, that you ought to indicate to your good son and friend that he is not under obligation to adopt this mode and to administer communion to himself and his household, and in addition it is unnecessary, because he is neither called thereto nor has he a command; besides, if the tyrannical ministers of the Church, who should do so, refuse to give it to him and his family, he may yet well be saved by his faith through the Word. It would also cause great offense to administer the Sacrament here and there in the house, so that finally it would not come to a good end, but divisions and wars will follow. For it is an altogether different thing about a public office than about a housefather in relation to the Word and Sacrament. One should not do anything without God's certain command. By mere devotion, for nothing good will come of it. (Of Communion in the House, St. Louis Ed., 10, 2224-2226.)

IV. Of the Public Exercise of the Rights and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood.

9.

The public exercise of the rights and duties of the spiritual priesthood, the common work in the name of all, is, according to the Word of God, vested in the Christian congregation, as the unit in the so-called visible Church. The power is so vested on the basis of the fact that the invisible Church (ekklesia universalis) is present where the means of grace are in use, even if the number of believers should amount to only two or three (ekklesia particularis representativa).

A. Proof from Scripture.

Matt. 18, 17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church (congregation); but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

So the congregation is a corporate body acting as the final court in the case of members who have erred. The congregation has the final word in the public exercise of the power of the keys.

Matt. 18, 20. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This is not a definition of a congregation, as has sometimes been stated, for the paragraph clearly introduces a new thought, but it clearly indicates that a corporate body as small as that referred to, with only two or three assembled in this fashion, has the promise of Christ's presence and assistance.

Eph. 4, 4-6. 11, 12. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in our hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

The reference is clearly to the invisible Church, but this serves as a background and foil of the so-called visible Church, in the Christian congregation, in whose midst the work of the ministry is performed. Where the means of grace are in use, there the invisible Church is built, for the authority given by Christ to His Church on earth is exercised by virtue of this investment, but through the visible bodies known as congregations. The fact that the individual congregation is the unit of the so-called visible Church and wields the power vested in the Church proper will be brought out in greater detail in the next propositions.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Apology: Therefore, in order that we may not despair, but may know that the Church will nevertheless remain in (until the end of the world), likewise that we may know that, however great the multitude of the wicked is, yet the Church (which is Christ's bride) exists, and that Christ reserves those gifts which He has promised to the

church, to forgive sins, to hear prayer, to give the Holy Ghost, this article in the Creed presents us these consolations. (Art. VII. VIII. Trigl., 229.)

Apology: Yet we confess that in this life many hypocrites and wicked men, mingled with these, have the fellowship of outward signs, who are members of the Church according to this fellowship of outward signs, and accordingly bear offices in the church (preach, administer the Sacraments, and bear the title and name of Christians). Neither does the fact that the Sacraments are administered by the unworthy detract from their efficacy, because, on account of the call of the Church, they represent the person of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, as Christ testifies, Luke 10, 16: He that heareth you heareth Me... When they offer the Word of God, when they offer the Sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ. (L.c., 237.)

Smalcald Articles: And Christ speaks in these words: Whatsoever ye shall bind, etc., and indicates to whom He has given the keys, namely to the Church (congregation): Where two or three are gathered together in My name. Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church, when He says: Tell it unto the Church. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 511.)

Smalcald Articles: For wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians, 4, 8, when he says: He ascended, He gave gifts to men. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church pastors and teachers, and adds that such are given for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Hence, wherever there is a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves, and becomes the minister and pastor of another... Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the Church, and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18, 20: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, etc. Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, 1 Ep. 2, 9: Ye are a royal priesthood. These words pertain to the true Church, which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers, since it alone has the priesthood. (L.c., 523 f.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: But the third way, which is the right form of evangelical order, should not be performed so publicly in the open among all kinds of people, but those who would seriously want to be regarded as Christians and confess the Gospel with hand and mouth, would be obliged to enter their names in a list and to assemble separately in one house for prayer, for reading, for baptizing, to receive the Sacrament, and to perform other Christian works. By this arrangement those who did not conduct themselves in a Christian manner, could be recognized, rebuked, corrected, expelled or excommunicated according to the rule of Christ, Matt. 18, 15 f. (German Mass and Order of Service of 1526. St. Louis Ed., 10, 229.)

Luther: Therefore every one who wants to be a Christian should be certain and consider well with himself that we are all priests in the same manner, that is, that we have the same power with regard to the Word of God and every Sacrament, only that it is not proper for every one to administer them, unless it be with the consent of the congregation, or by a call of those in charge. For what belongs to all in common, no one can claim for himself until he be called into that office. (Of the Babylonian Captivity of The Church. St. Louis Ed., 19, 117.)

Luther: Who are they whom he thus addresses? (In Matt. 18, 18.) Is it not all Christians? Is it not the Christian congregation?... The keys belong to the congregation of all Christians and to every one that is a member of such congregation, and that not only according to the power, but also according to use and in every way... The ministry of the Word belongs to all in common. But the words "bind" and "loosen" are essentially nothing but preaching the Gospel and applying it. For what does "loosen" mean but to proclaim that the sins are remitted by God? What does "binding" mean but to withhold the Gospel and to proclaim that the sins are retained? Therefore, whether they want it or not, we conclude that the keys belong to all in common; for they are nothing but the ministry by which the Word is turned to use and practise. (How Ministers Should Be Chosen. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1530 f.)

Luther: To come to a knowledge of the doctrine and to judge concerning it is the prerogative of all Christians and of every one, and that in this way that every one is cursed who interferes with this right by the breadth of a hair. For Christ Himself has ordained this right in many invincible passages, e.g. Matt. 7, 15: "Beware of false prophets that come to you in sheeps' clothing." This word He certainly speaks against the teachers, addressing himself to the people, and commands that it is to avoid their false doctrines. But how can they avoid them without knowing them? And how know them, if they do not have the right to judge them? But now He gives them not only the right, but the command to judge... Let us come back to the New Testament. When Christ says, John 10, 27, 5: "My sheep hear My voice; but the voice of the stranger they do not hear, but flee from him," does He not set the sheep as judges, and commit to the hearers the right to investigate?... Thus also everything that Christ in Matthew 24 and everywhere says of false teachers, what Peter and Paul say of the false apostles and teachers, and what John, 1 Ep. 4, 1 says of the trying of the spirits, -- does it not all point in the one direction, namely that the people have the authority to judge, to test, to condemn, and that with full sanction. (Luther's Answer to Henry VIII. St. Louis Ed., 19, 341 f.)

F. Pieper: The Church at large is the sum total of the local congregations, with the addition of individual believers that are not organically connected with the external church organization. When we speak of a local Christian congregation, we always mean only those Christians or those believers that compose the visible organization. The local congregations consist of believers only. As the hypocrites and evil persons are not a part of the Church at large, so they do not form a part of the local congregation. This is the clear doctrine of Scripture. (Christl. Dogm., III, 433 f.)

A Christian congregation (local church) is not a casual, occasional, or temporary gathering of Christians, but the permanent organization of Christians professing the same faith, who have locally established the Ministry of the Word in their midst and exercise the Office of the Keys, among whom, however, as a corporate body, assembly, or group, there may also be hypocrites and false brethren, likewise temporarily (during a period of church discipline) also known sinners.

A. Proof from Scripture.*

a. The first group of passages, of which we print only a few, shows that Scripture associates the term congregation (ekklesia), if applied to a visible entity restricted to one city or locality, with local churches.

Acts 14,28. And when they had ordained them elders in every church...they commended them to the Lord.

Even at the time of the first missionary journey the apostle Paul observed the distinction of the local congregations. These bodies were the units of the believers. This agrees with Acts 8,1, where the persecution of the congregation at Jerusalem is described, also Acts 15,22, where the elders and the congregation of Jerusalem are spoken of as acting together. Cp. Acts 18,22. Additional passages showing that the word ekklesia was applied to the visible body of believers in one city or locality are the following: Rom. 16,5; 1 Cor. 4,17; 16,19; Phil. 4,15; Col. 4,15; 1 Thess. 1,1; 2 Thess. 1,1; Philemon 2; 1 pet. 5,15; Acts 15,1; 20,17; Rom. 16,1,23; Rev. 2,1,8, 12,18; 3,1,7,14; 1 Cor. 1,2; 2 Cor. 1,1; 1 Cor. 16,1; 2 Cor. 8,1,18.

b. The second group of passages shows that such local congregations are the units with specific functions, most of which, in their very nature, could not be associated with a casual, temporary, or occasional group of Christians. The local congregation is clearly the functioning unit in the work of the Church.

Matt. 18,17. Tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

* The passages and testimonials of the previous proposition and of the next will apply here also.

The process of church discipline here described is here not only plainly committed to the local congregation, but its very nature excludes a casual or temporary gathering of Christians.

Acts 2,47. The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

So the ekklesia of Jerusalem was an established entity, with permanent local organization.

Acts 11,26. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.

Since Paul and Barnabas were not engaged in mission work proper at this time, but were associated with an established congregation, their teaching function was governed accordingly.

1 Cor. 14, 21. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues.

The reference is clearly to a service of the congregation at Corinth, of the believers who constituted this ekklesia. Other passages which evidently speak of the functioning of the congregation as a local body are 1 Cor. 14, 4, 5, 19, 28, 35; 1 Tim. 5, 16; 1 Cor. 6, 4; 11, 18; 12, 28; Jas. 5, 14; Acts 20, 28; 15, 41; 16, 5; 1 Cor. 7, 17; 11, 16; 2 Cor. 8, 19, 23; Rev. 1, 20. As a matter of fact, it cannot really be said that any passage referring clearly to a visible ekklesia can rightly be associated with the sum total of Christian confessors, even of any one province or country, for Acts 9, 31 is uncertain, and Phil. 3, 6; Acts 15, 9; Gal. 1, 13 refer to Paul's persecution of the congregation at Jerusalem.

c. The third group of passages indicates that hypocrites and false Christians, although not truly a part of the Christian congregations where they hold membership, are nevertheless within the outward organization, and that these are often the ones who cause schisms, divisions, and sects.

Matt. 7, 21. Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.

1 Cor. 11, 19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Acts 20, 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Matt. 13, 26, 38. When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also... The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.

Matt. 13, 47. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.

All of which shows that hypocrites and false Christians may be within the outward organization of the congregation, although not members of the true, invisible Church of God.

Gal. 2, 4, 5. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

So false brethren may sometimes come in, or arise in a Christian congregation, attempting to have matters arranged according to their false ideas.

3 John 9. I wrote unto the church; but Diotrophes, who loveth to have preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Here a false Christian had even usurped a position of power in the congregation. He was in the congregation of the Lord, but not of the Church.

Note: According to these and other passages of the Bible, the public administration of the gifts which Christ has given to his (invisible) Church, 1 Cor. 3, 22; 2 Cor. 13, 3, is directly entrusted to the local congregation; in this body the promise of internal

(Matt. 12, 28; Eph. 2, 16) and external growth (Matt. 13, 31, 32; Acts 6, 7; 2, 47) is fulfilled; by the Christian congregation the command to bring the Gospel to all the world (Luke 24, 47; or Acts 13, 2) is carried out; and in the midst of the local congregation we find the fulfillment of the words of Christ concerning tribulation and persecution (2 Thess. 1, 4). But a corporate organization that possesses and performs all things which Christ has entrusted to His ekklesia cannot be a mere casual or fortuitous phenomenon, a mere historical development, but must be regarded as existing and functioning by divine establishment and commission. To the local congregation the Lord has expressly committed church discipline in its specific sense; in its midst He has established the ministry of the public administration of the Word and the Sacraments; concerning it He has stated that it is to be found in Christian fellowship.-- That the local congregation should be established and perform its God-given functions according to divine ordinance appears also from the fact that the designations applied to the members of the Christian ministry in the New Testament are correlates requiring a corresponding term to give them the proper significance. A pastor or shepherd presupposes a flock--but the invisible flock cannot be shepherded by men (John 10, 16); it is included in the visible flock (Acts 20, 28); the minister or servant presupposes a group of people whom he serves (2 Cor. 3); the preacher presupposes hearers, hearers, moreover, who acknowledge him as given to them by God (Rom. 10, 14; Heb. 13, 17; Titus 1, 5); the steward (1 Cor. 4, 8) presupposes a household, the bishop such as are placed in his care (1 Tim. 5, 1, 5.). In none of these instances can the correlation expressed in these terms be thought of without a local connection or organization of Christians.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Augsburg Confession: This is their opinion, that the power of the Keys, or the power of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer sacraments. For with this commandment Christ sends forth His apostles, John 20, 21 seq., This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, according to their calling, either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things, an eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments... Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church (ecclesiastica potestas) has its own commission, to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments. (Art. XXVIII. Trigl., 85.)

Smalcald Articles: As the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire church (ekklesia), so the keys belong immediately to the entire church, because the keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one that desires it, just as it is actually manifest that the church has the power to admit ministers of the Gospel. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 82.)

C. Testimony of prominent teachers of the Church.

Luther: That the apostles at first went into strange houses and

reached was due to the fact that they had the commandment to do so, they were ordained, called, and sent that they should preach in all places, as Christ said Mark 16, 15: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. But since that time no one else has such a general apostolic command, but every bishop or minister has his definite parish (Kirchspiel) whom St. Peter therefore calls clergy, that is, a part, inasmuch as a definite part of the people is committed to each one (as St. Paul also writes to Titus), in which no other person or stranger, without his knowledge and consent, may dare to teach his parishioners, neither secretly nor publicly. (Exposition of Psalm 82, 4. St. Louis Ed., 5, 721.)

Luther: I want to save my conscience and open my mouth wide, no matter whether it will vex Pope, bishops, or whomever it will, and I say thus: According to the institution of Christ and the apostles every city should have a minister (Pfarrherr) or bishop, as St. Paul clearly writes, Titus 1, 5... I want to speak of the ministerial office, which God has established, which is to rule a congregation with preaching and the administration of the Sacraments, live with them and perform the duties of stewardship. (To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation. St. Louis Ed., 10, 314 f.)

Gospel Harmony of Cherritz-Layser-Gerhardt: The local congregation is the assembly of believers established in a certain place under its pastor.

F. Pieper: The local congregation is the congregation of believers who have, in a certain place, gathered about the Word and the Sacraments. (Christl. Dogmatik, III, 484.)

Walther: A...local congregation is the assembly of believing Christians in one definite locality. (Rechte Gottes, I.)

11.

Membership in a (visible) congregation involves: in a child, baptism and further instruction in the Word; in an adult, a knowledge of the chief doctrines of the Christian faith, the ability to examine oneself before partaking of the Lord's Supper, the same confession of faith, and a life in conformity with the Word of God.

a. The first group of passages brings proof of the fact that the local congregation is established by God's ordinance, so that membership in such congregation is not an indifferent matter, but a matter of conscience. Every believer should join and be active in a local Christian congregation. To neglect this is to set aside a clear intention of God, as expressed in His Word.

Matt. 18, 15-17. If thy brother shall trespass against thee... if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.

Here membership in a congregation is presupposed, as a condition which is self-evident, the Lord desiring that the public exercise of the rights of the spiritual priesthood in the name of all function through the Christian congregation.

Acts 2, 47. The Lord added to the church (congregation) daily such as should be saved. Chrv. 27.

The additions were evidently made to the visible body of believers, the Lord's ordinance being that the Christian life and labors should be found within the scope of the Christian congregation.

Rom. 12, 5. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

It should be noted that the picture of a body, with head and members, used of the true or invisible Church, is also used for the church in the secondary or derived sense.

1 Pet. 2, 5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

It would manifestly be a contradiction if those who are united in the closest fellowship of faith in the invisible Church would refuse to give evidence of fellowship with the brethren.

1 Cor. 16, 3. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

The Christians of Corinth, then, were expected to act in concord, as a corporate body. They were not a chance assembly or organization, but a fixed and definite entity.

b. The passages which are next offered are those which indicate the conditions of membership in the Christian congregation in the case of children.

Matt. 28, 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (The literal rendering of the verse is: Make disciples of all nations by baptizing them.)

Acts 2, 38, 39. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

It is evident that Baptism is the sacrament of admission to the Church, and that children are specifically included, for the promise is stated to be also unto them.

Col. 2, 11, 12. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.

As in the Old Testament the male children were received into the Jewish Church by the sacrament of circumcision, so in the New Testament the same office is performed by the sacrament which has taken place of the Old Testament circumcision, namely Holy Baptism.

1 John 3, 12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.

The membership of little children in the Church is established through the forgiveness of sins given to them through Holy Baptism, by faith.

2 Tim. 3, 15. And that thou (little child) hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to save thee (little child) through

faith which is in Christ Jesus. 1st. In the infancy of the first words is: That from infancy...

Eph. 6, 4. Ye fathers...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

This is only one of the many passages of the Bible which tell us that children must be taught the way of salvation with constant application.

c. The passages in this group speak of the qualifications for adult membership in a Christian congregation.

Acts 16, 33, 34. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

If an adult is not yet baptized, it is essential that he receive this Sacrament, as that of initiation or beginning membership in the Christian congregation.

1 Cor. 11, 28, 29. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

This ability to examine oneself before partaking of the Lord's Supper presupposes a working knowledge of the Law of God and an understanding of the redemption wrought by Christ, together with an appreciation of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and its value to the believing guest at the Lord's table.

Acts 2, 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

This is the situation as it should obtain in a true Christian congregation and along these lines sound instruction should proceed.

2 John 10, 11. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Fellowshipping with those who hold false doctrine is clearly and emphatically forbidden by God. Hence every Christian must be informed concerning the true doctrine and the differences in doctrine.

2 Thess. 3, 6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Rom. 16, 17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

In either case the direction given by the apostle indicates that the Christians must be thoroughly acquainted with the truth of the Gospel, so as to be able to distinguish truth from error.

1 John 4, 15. He that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, God loveth him. Whoso loveth him that loveth not his brother, he is false to him that loveth him, and his love is false.

This is a demand which the Lord addresses to the adult believers at all times. It is expected of them that they be at home in the truth of God's Word.

d. The passages of this group emphasize the need of great care in building up a Christian congregation, lest the leaders of the Church become guilty of unionistic and syncretistic practices.

1 John 4:1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

Luke 9:62. No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

The Lord desires an earnest and wholehearted acceptance of the truth of the Gospel; and until a candidate for admission is able to give proper assurances along this line, it were better to delay matters until conviction has been wrought.

Luke 14, 26:27,33. If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.

It is desirable to gain members for the Lord, but not at the expense of truth and the proper understanding of discipleship. We are not permitted to make the membership easier than He Himself has made it.

2 Cor. 6, 14-17. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers... therefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.

1 Cor. 10, 16,21. Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?... Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

Those who are not yet ready to forsake the things and the fellowship of the world are not yet fit to be members of a true Christian congregation.

Titus 3, 10,11. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

If the confession of faith of all members of the same congregation is not the same, a condition is created that is not in harmony with God's Word. Those who hold views of doctrine contrary to Scripture cannot remain in the membership of a true Christian congregation.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Apologet: And that which follows, namely, the communion of saints, seems to be added in order to explain what the Church signifies, namely, the congregation of saints, who have with each other the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, who sustain, sanctify, and govern their hearts. (Art. VII. VII. Trigl. 288.)

Large Catechism: In the first place, we take up Baptism, by which we are first received into the Christian Church...lastly, we must also know what Baptism signifies, and why God has ordained just such external sign and ceremony for the Sacrament by which we are first received into the Christian Church. (Of Baptism, Trigl., 732-748.)

Large Catechism: Thus we have the entire Sacrament, both as to what it is in itself and as to what it brings and profits. Now we must also see who is the person that receives this power and benefit. That is answered briefly, as we said above of Baptism and often elsewhere: Whoever believes it has what the words declare and bring. (Of the Sacrament of the Altar, Trigl., 761.)

Formula of Concord: We believe, teach, and confess that all the worthiness of the guests of this heavenly feast is and consists in the most holy obedience and perfect merit of Christ alone, which we appropriate to ourselves by true faith, and whereof (of the application of this merit) we are assured by the Sacrament, and not at all in (but in no wise does this worthiness depend upon) our virtues or inward and outward preparations. (VII. Of the Lord's Supper, Trigl., 813.)

Large Catechism: Outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no holiness (sanctification). (The Creed, Art. III, Trigl., 695.)

Smalcald Articles: This being the case, all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt. 7, 15; Beware of false prophets. And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated as cursed, Gal. 1, 8; Titus 3, 10. And 2 Cor. 6, 14 he says: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion hath light with darkness? (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Trigl., 517.) Compare here Article XII of the Formula of Concord: Of Other Heretics and Sects. Trigl., 1035 ff., also 777.

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: I am a part of Christ's Church. For I have certain signs and guarantees, namely, Baptism, the Gospel, the Lord's Supper, which testify that I am a member of Christ. (On Ps. 45, 10. St. Louis Ed., 5, 223.)

Luther: Which testimony of the whole Christian Church (if we had nothing more) ought alone to be sufficient for us, that we remain with this article and not to hear or to suffer any sectarian concerning it. (Luther's Letter against the Sectarians. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1684.)

C. F. W. Walther: Every Christian, by his soul's salvation, is bound to hold the confession of a congregation of the right creed and their pastors, and to adhere to those wherever he finds them. (Rich. and Am., 141.)

Although in the congregation as such all members have the rights of the spiritual priesthood (which every Christian may and should assert, as the situation may require), yet the ordinary business of the congregation in the work of the kingdom is performed by its voting membership.

A. Proof from Scripture.

1 Cor. 3, 21-23. All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Here the apostle, in addressing the whole congregation at Corinth, expressly ascribes the possession of all rights to all.

1 Cor. 2, 15. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Since every believer is guided by the Word of God, he has the highest form of spiritual discernment in all things; and God expects every Christian to exercise this discernment also in the functions of the spiritual priesthood.

Gal. 3, 26-28. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

So the rights of the spiritual priesthood are vested also in the women who have been baptized and are members of the Christian congregation.

Jer. 2, 5-6. Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor.

While social distinctions are recognized by Scriptures, there is no distinction of rank in the Christian congregation, but the rich and the poor are to be regarded as being on the same level in performing the work of the kingdom.

1 Cor. 12, 7. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1 Cor. 14, 34. Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law.

Here is a restriction made by the Lord Himself, namely that public teaching and preaching, in the congregations, is not permitted to Christian women.

1 Tim. 2, 11, 12. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, as the Lord God.

Here the same principle is brought out, namely that a Christian woman is not to teach in public meetings of the congregation, nor to take part in the civil government of the church. In both cases the apostle makes specific application to conditions of the New Testament.

1 Pet. 5, 5. Likewise, see younger, submit yourselves unto the elder...for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Here Scripture excludes those from functions and positions of government in the congregation who still come under the heading of the younger.

Note: A comparison of these passages clearly shows that the government of the congregation is in the hands of the men, and the ordinary routine business of the congregation should be performed by the male membership. That the ordinary congregation confines this function to those male members who have asked for the privilege of the vote, is in keeping with the Scriptural injunction that everything should be done decently and in order. At the same time it should be noted: Suggestions, objections, and protests concerning matters of vital interest, especially those pertaining to a proposed candidate for the office of the ministry or of any auxiliary office, must be considered in some orderly way, and, if substantiated, acted upon, even if made by a person not a voter, by a woman, or by a person still in his teens. For a congregation comprises all believers that have gathered about the means of grace in one place, whether these be men or women or children.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: In addition to this it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify...As the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the keys belong immediately to the entire Church. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 511.)

Smalcald Articles: For wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of the Pope. Trigl., 528.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: God has never consented that a woman should govern. It may happen that she is ordained for government...The woman is created for her need, namely to use her discretion and her reason to bring up her children. For every person has the highest fitness in that for which he was created. "A woman can better handle a child with her smallest finger than a man with both fists." (Exposition of Eccl. 7, 27. St. Louis Ed., 5, 1517.)

Luther: But it is true that with reference to this point (the public administration of the means of grace) the Holy Ghost has made an exception in the case of women, children, and persons not apt for the office...for which children, women, and other persons are not fit, although they are fit to hear the Word of God, to receive Baptism, the Sacrament, absolution, and are truly consecrated Christians, as St. Peter, 1 Tim. 5, 14, says. For even nature and God's creation present this distinction that women (much less children and fools) may and should not have the government...and the Gospel does not abrogate this natural right, but sustains it as God's order

and creation. (Of Councils and Churches. St. Louis Ed., 16, 2280.)

Luther: In the New Testament the Holy Ghost, through St. Paul, has ordered that the women should be silent in the church or congregation, and says: "It is the command of the Lord," 1 Cor. 14, 34; although he knew well that Joel had prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit also upon His handmaids, and had also seen the four daughters of Philip prophesy. Acts 21, 9. But in the church or congregation, where the public ministry is, they should be silent and not preach. Otherwise they may well pray along, sing, praise, and say Amen, also read at home and teach one another, admonish, comfort, also expound the Scripture as well as they can. (Von Schleichern und Winkelpredigten. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1675 f.)

Luther: Now you might say: If that is true, that we are all priests, what confusion will result? Is there to be no difference observed among the people, and are the women also to be priests? Answer: In the New Testament no priests ought to wear the tonsure; not that it is wrong in itself, if one wants to have himself shaved; but for this reason, that no distinction should be made between them and the ordinary Christian person; in this way that all who are now called priests should be considered laymen, like the rest and only a few officials would be elected by the congregation to preach. In this way there is a distinction only outwardly, for the sake of the office to which one is called by the congregation. But before God there is no difference, and certain ones are taken out of the mass only for this reason that they might, instead of the congregation, exercise and carry out the office which belongs to all, that one has no more power than the other. Therefore none should step forward on his own initiative and preach in the congregation, but one must be taken from the mass and placed in office. ...If you want to look at the Christians, you must look upon no difference nor remark: This is a man or a woman, a servant or a master, old or young, as St. Paul says Gal. 3, 28. It is all one thing, and they are all spiritual people. Therefore they are all priests and may all proclaim the Word of God; only that women are not to speak in the congregation, but are to let the men preach, on account of the command that they are to be subject to their husbands, as St. Paul teaches 1 Cor. 14, 34. God permits such order to remain, but makes no distinction of power. But if there were no men, but only women as in numbers, there a woman could be chosen who might preach. (Exposition of 1 Pet. 2, 5. St. Louis Ed., 9, 1014 f.)

Luther: St. Peter desires such order in the Christian Church that the young should follow the older, in order that everything may proceed in the humility or subordination toward the superior. If this were now observed, there would be less need of many laws. He straightway directs that the young should be governed by the wisdom of the old. And St. Peter is of the opinion that such old people should be learned and prudent in the Holy Ghost. If they are prudent then it is well that they govern the younger ones. (Exposition of 1 Pet. 5, 1. St. Louis Ed., 9, 1101 f.)

June 23/66

Among the duties of every Christian congregation are the following: that the Word of God dwell in its midst richly, particularly through the ministry of the Word; that the purity of Christian doctrine and life be preserved; that Christian discipline be exercised in agreement with Matthew 18; that the poor and needy brethren be provided for; that the business of the congregation be performed decently and in order; that the congregation maintain fellowship with those of the same faith; that the needs of the Church at large be furthered.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Col. 3, 16. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Thess. 2, 12, 13. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Gal. 6, 6. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Heb. 10, 25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

These passages clearly presuppose and demand the use of the Word of God in the organization of the Christian congregation, also in common assemblies, where the Word is in charge of the ministers.

Matt. 18, 15-18. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then tell with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church (ekklesia), let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Here the discipline of the Christians is clearly vested in the local church or congregation, as the unit of the so-called visible Church. Cp. 1 Cor. 5, 1-13.

Gal. 6, 1, 2. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Thess. 5, 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

2 Thess. 3, 6, 14, 15. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

2 John 10, 11. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.

These passages further impress upon the members of the congregation as such the responsibility which they bear with regard to brotherly admonition and discipline in every form. In each case the admonition is addressed to a group, to the congregation, for it is in such assembly or organization that these admonitions are best observed.

Gal. 6, 9, 10. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Gal. 2, 10. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

James 1, 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Rom. 12, 13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

1 Thess. 4, 11, 12. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

These passages speak not only of the duty of the individual, but of that of the congregation as such, especially the last two.

1 Cor. 14, 33, 40. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let all things be done decently and in order.

2 Cor. 8, 20, 21. Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us, providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Col. 2,5. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

While it is not essential that a congregation be organized with an elaborate machinery of offices, rules, and regulations, the Lord, who is a God of order, wants the business of the Church transacted in an orderly manner.

Eph. 4,5. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

1 Thess. 4,9,10. But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia; but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.

2 Pet. 1,5-7. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

Hebr. 13,1. Let brotherly love continue.

Rom. 15,26,27. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

2 Cor. 8,18. And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord.

So the unity of the spirit is above all to be observed in insisting upon doctrinal agreement; but this unity should find expression also in deeds of brotherly love or kindness, thus strengthening the ties of the existing unity.

Matt. 10,32,33. Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.

Acts 11,21-23. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. Cp. Acts 15,1 ff.

Acts 14,27. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

It is clear that the congregation at Antioch felt, not merely curiosity and interest, but a responsibility for these Gentile congregations that had been established by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.

Acts 16,4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

Although the autonomy of each congregation was carefully safeguarded by the apostle Paul, he himself delivered the resolutions of the meeting at Jerusalem to the various Galatian congregations, and the considerations of unity and mutual responsibility were strong enough to influence the brethren to accede.

Matt. 9,37,38. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: Wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of the Pope. Trigl., 525.)

Apology: The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God; which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. (Namely, where God's Word is pure, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, and there are Christians.) And this Church alone is called the body of Christ. (Art. VII and VIII. Trigl., 227.)

Apology: The true adornment of the churches is godly, useful, and clear doctrine, the devout use of the Sacraments, ardent prayer, and the like. (Art. XXIV. Trigl., 401.)

Apology: Of all acts of worship that is the greatest, most holy, most necessary, and highest, which God has required as the highest in the First and the Second Commandment, namely, to preach the Word of God. For the ministry is the highest office in the Church. (Art. XV. Trigl., 327.)

Smalcald Articles: When the true judgment of the Church is removed, godless dogmas and godless services cannot be removed, and for many ages they destroy innumerable souls... And as the rest of the Christians must censure all other errors of the Pope, so they must also rebuke the Pope when he evades and impedes the true investigation and true decision of the Church. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 519-521.)

6. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: But let us continue and also prove this from the priestly offices, as they call them, that all Christians are priests in the same way; for these passages, 1 Pet. 2, 9: We are a royal priesthood, and Rev. 5, 10: Thou hast made us to be kings and priests unto God,--these I have quoted sufficiently in other books. But these are practically all the priestly offices: teach, preach, and proclaim the Word of God, baptize, bless or administer the Sacrament of the Altar, bind and loose from sins, pray for others, sacrifice and pass judgment upon the doctrine and spirit of others. These are truly mighty powerful and royal things. (How Ministers Are to Be Chosen and Inducted. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1572.)

Luther: God's Word cannot be without God's people. Again, God's people cannot be without God's Word. Who would preach it or hear it preached, if there were no people of God? And what could or would the people of God believe, if the Word of God were not there? ...In the second place one can tell the people of God or the Christian, holy people by the holy Sacrament of Baptism, where it is taught, believed, and used rightly according to Christ's institution. For that is a public sign and precious sacred thing, by which the people of God is sanctified...In the third place one can tell the people of God or a Christian, holy people by the holy Sacrament of the Altar, where it is rightly administered, believed, and received according to Christ's institution. For this is a public sign and precious sacred thing, left by Christ, whereby His people are sanctified, that they might exercise themselves and publicly confess that they are Christians, as they do with the Word and Holy Baptism. (Of the Councils and Churches, of 1539. St. Louis Ed., 16, 2274 ff.)

Luther: In this story you see in the first place what form a Christian congregation should have; and in addition you see a true picture of a spiritual government, as the apostles conducted it here. They had the care of the souls, were concerned with preaching and with praying; and yet they also provide for the care of the body and put up a number of men who are to distribute the goods, as you have heard. Thus the Christian government takes care of the people according to body and soul, so that no one suffers want, as Luke says, and all are richly fed and well supplied according to both body and soul. That is a fine picture and example, and it would be well to make the beginning along these lines, if the people were only in the proper condition, that a city, such as this one, might be divided into four or five parts, and to each part a preacher and several deacons were given, who would supply that part with preaching and distributed the goods, visit the sick people, and be concerned that no one should suffer want. But no haven't the persons for that, therefore I do not dare to make a beginning until such a time when our good Lord will make Christians. (Sermon for St. Stephen's Day. St. Louis Ed., 11, 666b.)

Luther: A bishop, or bishop, has no power to lay any regulation or command upon his church, or even with the express or tacit agreement of the church. For the church (congregation) is free and the mistress, and the bishops are not to be lords over the faith of the churches, nor burden and oppress them against their will. For

they are only servants and stewards, not lords of the church. But when the church has agreed, as being one body with the bishop, then they may lay upon themselves whatever they want, as long as piety is not harmed. (Luther's letter to Melancthon concerning Human Regulations, of 1530. St. Louis Ed., 161, 1014.)

Luther: For if it can be done without sin and danger and without offense, it's a fine thing if the churches agree also in external things, although these are free, just as they agree in spirit, confession, Word, Sacrament, etc. For that makes a good impression and pleases everybody well... For St. Paul faithfully teaches us everywhere that we should be diligent to teach and to live in agreement and harmony, and to beware of disharmony and disagreement. Rom. 12, 16; 1 Cor. 1, 10. (Short Confession of the Lord's Supper. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1790 f.)

Luther: This is a sermon full of comfort for us, for we are also included in these words of Christ, when He says: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature". For here are concerned and included all who hear such preaching, no matter where they are and how many or how few they are. For "all the world" does not mean a fraction or two, for everything and all, what may be called people and wherever they are. For that reason the Gospel had to have free course and still has, so that, although it does not always remain in one place, it yet must get everywhere and be proclaimed in all places and corners of the world. And as this is a general command to preach the Gospel everywhere and to all men, so it is also a general command and rule of God that all should believe this Word. (Sermon on Ascension Day. St. Louis Ed., 11, 970.)

Synodical Report, Kansas District, 1867: It is God's will that Christians should join in forming visible local congregations: a. for the establishment and maintenance of the ministry; b. for the administration of the Sacraments; c. for the exercise of Christian discipline; d. for the effective carrying of charitable activities; e. for the extension of the Church. (Reprint, 5.)

Further statements and testimonies may be found under propositions 9, 11, and 12.

Y. Of the Ministerial Office or the Office of Preaching in the Home Restricted Church.

14. The public exercise of the rights of the congregation connected with the administration of the Word of God is delegated, transferred or transmitted by the Christian congregation to its minister or pastor (and his assistants). He is in charge of the public functions of the ministerial office in the midst of the congregation, as a steward of the mysteries of God. This particular public exercise and administration of his office, like all his and duties is clearly identified, in Holy Scriptures, with the ministry of the Lord. This office does not exist in the power of the priesthood of believers, but in a special power of the Holy Spirit.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Note: That all believers are spiritual priests and that the Christian congregation, as a corporate unit, is charged with performing the duties of the spiritual priesthood and carrying out the provisions of the Great Commission in public, in the name of all, has been shown in Parts III and IV, in propositions 7-13, inclusive. Particular emphasis ought to be placed upon the fact that Matt. 18, 15-18 and John 20, 21-23, while giving the power of the keys to all, limit the public exercise of the powers to the local congregation.

a. The passages of the first group show that the congregation transmits or delegates the rights connected with the administration of the means of grace, for public or representative purposes, to its minister or pastor.

Acts 1, 15-26. The election of Matthias. (Although this was a special case, it seems that the principle stated in the proposition was observed.)

Acts 14, 23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

The word translated "ordained" in the Authorized Version is choiro in the regular term for the election of men by having the votes taken in public assembly by the raising of hands. See 2 Cor. 8, 19. The word is clearly so used by Ignatius of Antioch (To the Philadelphians, X, 1; To the Smyrnaeans, XII, 2; To Polycarp, VII, 2). Although the construction of the verse, therefore, makes Paul and Barnabas the subject of the sentence, the understanding evidently is that the apostles were in charge of the election and installation of the elders, but that the congregation voted in the usual manner. Bishop (Christl. Dogmatik, III, 616 f.): "It has been said and is being said that Acts 14, 23 and Titus 1, 5 say nothing of calling or electing on the part of the congregation, but that the account rather states what Paul and Barnabas did and what Titus was to do at the command of Paul. It is claimed that nothing is said of an activity or a cooperation of the congregations. But Luther's reminder is well taken (18, 317): 'Although Paul orders Titus to ordain priests, it does not follow that he did this by his own authority, but that he installed them according to the example of the apostles through the vote of the people, otherwise the words of Paul would conflict with the example of the apostles.' In addition it should be noted that the word choiro in Acts 14, 23 clearly indicates that a vote of the congregation was taken in appointing the elders.ayer translates choiro with 'elect by voting.' He remarks to the passage: 'Paul and Barnabas elected presbyters by voting, that is, they directed their election in the congregation.' In view of this translation, Key, adds: 'The analogy of Acts 1, 23 demands this consideration of the word choiro, which derives from the ancient form of voting by the raising of hands, occurs in 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 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990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

as though this commissioning had taken place only by apostolic authority (Lolke)...Erasmus has it correct: suffragis delectos... Altogether false and following preconceived notions Catholic commentators: that it concerns the cheirothecia, laying on of hands in the ordination of presbyters. Besides, the election of public ministers by vote of the congregation was long retained in the Church of the first centuries."

Acts 6, 2-6. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples...Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom...And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose...

This passage clearly shows that even in the matter of choosing men for an auxiliary office, the apostles did not simply exert their apostolic authority, but caused the congregation to exercise its authority and thus to transmit, transfer, or delegate certain functions pertaining to the duty of all to these men.

2 Cor. 2, 10. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also; for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes I forgave it in the person of Christ.

Hence even the apostle would not act alone, without having the authority of the local congregation delegated to him.

b. The passages of the second group speak of the stewardship of those engaged in the office of the ministry, of the public functions of the office.

1 Cor. 4, 1-6. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes.

Not only the apostle in the primary sense of the term, but also his assistant, who was for a while pastor of the congregation at Corinth, is here called a steward of the mysteries of God, and that on account, in behalf of the Corinthians.

Matt. 13, 52. Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

This is an apt illustration of the functions connected with the office of the Christian ministry, the steward providing material from his treasure as it is needed.

2 Tim. 2, 15. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

The illustration is undoubtedly taken from the technical language of the temple sacrifices, of the proper dissection of sacrificial animals. It is particularly apt in presenting the activity of a pastor in making the proper distinction of law and Gospel.

1 Pet. 4,10,11. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold graces of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

Rom. 10,14,15. How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

So the public preaching function of the ministry depends upon a commission given to those who are engaged in the work of the office.

Acts 6,4. We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.

That was the main public function of the apostles, as it is that of every minister of the Word, the service of the Word.

a. The passages of the third group show that the authority vested in the (called) ministers of the Word is to be acknowledged by the very people who issue the call and place a man in office.

Luke 10,16. He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.

Heb. 13,17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

1 Thess. 5,12,13. We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

1 Tim. 5,17-19. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, They shall not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward. Against the elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

Gal. 6,6,7. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, 1 Ep. 2,9: Ye are a royal priesthood. These words pertain to the true Church, which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers since it alone has the priesthood. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 525 f.)

Now the elections of the Church, assembled at Smalcald, confirm in the name of the Creed that the Church is the possessor of the priestly office, and also have the authority to transfer or

delegate the office that exercises and administers these priestly rights. Our symbols, then, declare the public office of the ministry to be an authority or power by which the priestly rights of all believers in a congregation are exercised in the public office of the ministry in the name of all.

Smalcald Articles: In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys, Matt. 18.19 adds: If two or three of you shall agree on earth, etc. Therefore He grants the keys principally and immediately to the church, just as also for this reason the church has principally the right of calling. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 511.)

Smalcald Articles: Wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians, 4.8, when he says: He ascended; He gave gifts to men. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church pastors and teachers, and adds that such are given for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 525.)

Although the right and the power of the keys are given to each and every believer, and in the case of necessity or in an emergency a layman may administer Baptism and speak the words of absolution in private, yet God has clearly established the order that the believers, acting together in a local congregation, should place the public exercise of these rights into the hands of the called servant of the Word.

Augsburg Confession: But this is their opinion (that of the Lutheran confessors), that the power of the keys, or the power of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. For with this commandment Christ sends forth His apostles, John 20.21 seq... This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, according to their calling, either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted not bodily, but eternal things, an eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments... The power of the Church has its own commission, to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments... When therefore the question is concerning the jurisdiction of bishops, civil authority must be distinguished from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Again, according to the Gospel, or, as they say, by divine right, there belongs to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, no jurisdiction except to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrine contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, simply by the

Word. Herein the congregation of necessity and by divine right must obey them, according to Luke 10,16: 'He that heareth you, heareth Me.' (Art. XXVIII. Trigl., 85 f.)

Smalcald Articles: Again the Council of Nice determined that bishops be elected by their own churches, in the presence of some neighboring bishop or of several. The same was observed (for a long time, not only in the East, but) also in the West, and in the Latin churches, as Cyprian and Augustine testify. For Cyprian says in his fourth letter to Cornelius: Accordingly, as regards the divine observance and apostolic practice, you must diligently keep and practise what is also observed among us and in almost all the provinces, that for celebrating ordinations properly, whatever bishops of the same province live nearest should come together with the people for whom a pastor is being appointed, and the bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, who most fully know the life of each one, which we have also seen done among us at the ordination of our colleague Sabinus, that by the suffrage of the entire brotherhood, and by the judgment of the bishops who had assembled in their presence, the episcopate was conferred and hands laid on him. - Cyprian calls this custom a divine tradition and an apostolic observance, and affirms that it is observed in almost all the provinces. ...Lastly, how can the Pope be over the entire Church by divine right when the church has the election...? (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 50 f.)

Large Catechism: Thus we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment, fathers in blood and fathers in office, or those to whom belongs the care of the family, and those to whom belongs the care of the country. Besides these there are yet spiritual fathers; not like those in the papacy, who have indeed had themselves called thus, but have performed no function of the paternal office. For those only are called spiritual fathers who govern and guide us by the Word of God: as St. Paul boasts his fatherhood 1 Cor. 4,15, where he says: In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. Now, since they are fathers they are entitled to their honor, even above all others. But here it is bestowed least; for the way which the world knows for honoring them is to drive them out of the country and to grudge them a piece of bread, and, in short, they must be (as says St. Paul, 1 Cor. 4,15) as the filth of the world and everybody's refuse and footrag. Yet there is need that this also be urged upon the populace, that those who would be Christians are under obligation in the sight of God to esteem them worthy of double honor who minister to their souls, that they deal well with them and provide for them. For that, God is willing to add to you sufficient blessing and will not let you come to want. (The Fourth Commandment. Trigl., 627.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Clement of Rome: We consider that it is not just to remove from their ministry those who were appointed by them, or later on by

other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered to the flock of Christ without blame, humbly, peaceably, and disinterestedly, and for many years have received a universally favorable testimony. (Letter to the Corinthians, XLIV. Lake, Apostolic Fathers, I, 85.)

Ignatius of Antioch: It is proper for you, as a church of God, to appoint (chelepo, onchai) a deacon to go as the ambassador of God to it. (To the Philadelphians, X. L.c., 249.)

Luther: In this passage (Matt. 18, 19, 20) we hear that even two or three, assembled in the name of Christ, have the same power in all things as St. Peter and all apostles. For the Lord Himself is there, as He also says John 14, 23... For we have here the Lord of all angels and creatures Himself, who says that they all should have equal power, keys, and office, also two simple Christians alone, assembled in His name. (Of the Papacy at Rome, Founded by the Devil. St. Louis Ed., 17, 1074 f.)

Luther: There are two forms of call into the ministry of the Word. One is done without means, immediately, by God... The other calling is done by men, and yet the same is done by God, through means. And that is a call of love; as, when one is called out of the multitude as a bishop or preacher, concerning whom one believes that he has the Word of God and is able to impart it to others by his doctrine and preaching... The Christian Church alone possesses the keys, otherwise no one; although the bishop and the Pope may use them, as men to whom the office has been committed by the congregation. A pastor has charge of the office of the keys; he baptizes, preaches, administers the Sacrament, and performs other offices, wherewith he ministers to his congregation, not on his own account, but on account of the congregation; for he is a minister of the whole congregation, to whom the key is transmitted, although he himself be a mortal. (Church Postil. St. Louis Ed., 11, 1910. 2304.)

Luther: Therefore the consecration of a bishop (pastor) is nothing else than when, in the place and person of the whole multitude one is taken from the multitude, all of whom have equal power, and he is commanded to exercise the same power for the others; just as if ten brothers, sons of a king, with equal rights in the inheritance, should elect one to have charge of their inheritance for all; although they are all kings and have equal power, and yet one is given charge to rule. (To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation. St. Louis Ed., 10, 271.)

Luther: That is the call into a public office among the Christians. But when one would come into an assembly where there are no Christians, one might do like the apostles, and not wait for a call. For there one does not have the office of preaching. But if one should say: Here are Christians; I want to preach and instruct them concerning the Christian religion; and they would form a body, elect and call me as their bishop; then I would have a call. (Hypothetical of Ep. 3, 1. St. Louis Ed., 3, 743.)

Luther: We desire and propose to exercise and use our Christian liberty at all times, as far as the installing of our public ministry, with calling, electing, commissioning, and dismissing of our pastors for the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments alone is concerned, not otherwise than according to precept and order of divine Biblical Scripture. (Constitution of the Congregation at Leissnig. St. Louis Ed., 10, 960.)

Luther: Since a Christian congregation should and can not be without the Word of God, it follows strongly enough that the Christians (as a congregation) must have teachers and preachers to be in charge of the Word...We must follow Scripture and among ourselves call and put into office those who are found to possess aptness and whom God has illuminated with intelligence and blessed with gifts for that purpose...If there are Christians in one place, all of whom have equal powers and rights, then no one Christian should push himself forward, but he should wait for a call and commission to preach and teach in the place and by the command of the others...This verse (1 Cor. 14, 40) is not to be an uncertain foundation, since it in superabundant measure gives power to the Christian congregation, that she may preach, have some one preach, and call a minister...No bishop shall place a preacher into office without the choice, will, and call of the congregation, but shall confirm him who is chosen and called by the congregation. If he refuses to do this, that the man should nevertheless be confirmed by the call of the congregation. (That a Christian Congregation Has the Right to Judge All Doctrine. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1543 ff.)

Luther: Since all Christians possess all rights in common, it would not be proper for one to place himself at the head and to appropriate to himself what belongs to us all...But the common right demands that one or as many as it pleases the congregation, be called and received, and in the stead and name of all those who have the very same right, exercise these offices publicly; lest a terrible disorder follow in the midst of the people of God and the Church be turned into a Babylon. (How Ministers of the Church Are to Be Called and Installed. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1589.)

Luther: Out of the whole mass of Christians some must be taken who are to rule others, whom God gives special gifts and the ability, so that they are fit for the office. As St. Paul says, Eph. 4, 11, 12: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," that is, those who are previously Christians and baptized priests, that they be fit for the work of the office or service, in order that the body of Christ, that is, the Christian congregation or church, be edified. For though we are all priests, yet we cannot and should not on that account all preach or teach, and rule; but some must be separated and called out of the multitude to whom this office may be entrusted. (Exposition of Ps. 110, 4. St. Louis Ed., 5, 1037.)

Luther: Every bishop or pastor has his definite diocese or parish, which St. Peter 1 Pet. 5, 3 for that reason calls cleros, that is, parts, since to every one is committed his part of the people, as St. Paul also writes to Titus, in which no other or

stranger, without his knowledge and consent, should dare to teach his parishioners, either privately or publicly. (Exposition of Ps. 82.4. St. Louis Ed., 5, 721.)

Luther: The pastor is in charge of the pulpit, of Baptism, of the Sacrament, and the care of souls is committed to him... Therefore it must be said: Either bring evidence of your call and command to preach, or hold your peace, and do not preach. For it is called an office, yea, the office of the ministry. But no one may have an office except and without a command and call. (Von Schleichern und Winkelpredigern. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1666. 1668.)

Luther: I may teach at home, but for all that I am not a public preacher. (Earning Addressed to Lorenz Castner. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1759.)

Luther: Of this every one who wants to be regarded as a Christian may be sure, and should well consider the point, namely that we are all priests in the same way, that is, that we have equal power in the Word of God and in every Sacrament, but in such a way that it is not proper for any one to make public use of this power except with the consent of the congregation... For what belongs to all together no one can claim for himself, until he receives the call. (Of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. St. Louis Ed., 19, 117.)

Luther: For we must have bishops, pastors, or preachers, who publicly and privately have charge of the aforesaid four things (Preach the Word, baptize, administer the Eucharist, exercise the Office of the Keys), administer and exercise them, in behalf and in the name of the church, or rather by the institution of Christ, as St. Paul says, Eph. 4, 11... It must be delegated to one alone, and he must be permitted to preach, baptize, observe, and administer the Sacrament; all the others must be satisfied with this, and agree to it. Where thou seest this, thou mayest be sure that God's people and the Christian, holy people is to be found there. (Of the Councils and Churches. St. Louis Ed., 16, 2279.)

Johannes Wigand: Every church in every place, that is, the whole assembly, of the laity as well as of the clergy, has the power to elect, to call, and to ordain able ministers of the Church... This is clear from the testimonies concerning the power of the keys, for the keys are given to the whole Church. (Centur. I, 803. Quoted in Walther, Pastoraltheologie, 894.)

Pieper: So far as the expression is concerned that the congregations transmit (übertragen) the office to fitting persons through the call, it is a matter of surprise that it has been attacked even by Lutherans. The expression must be designated as adequate, as long as the doctrine of Scripture is held, namely that the Word and the Sacraments are given by Christ to all Christians for their possession and use. If the further concession is made that there is no office among the Christians in which individual persons, who are apt to teach, leave the congregation with Word and Sacrament, then this office can materialize only by transmission. Even Hase designates this as the "evangelical doc-

trine held by the Church": "In Christ and in the congregation is the source of all church power. Hence every church office is only delegated (transmitted), in the case of an abuse falls back to the congregation, and in a case of emergency every ministerial act can be performed by the individual member of the congregation." To this we add that the expression "transmission" has been abundantly used by the old Lutheran theologians.--Brenz (Expos. of John 20): The church has its ministers, to whom the public ministry of the Gospel, that is, remission and retention of sins is delegated.--Polykarp Ieyser (Harmony of the Gospels): This power (to loosen and to bind) is, Math. 18,18 given by Christ to the church, which can delegate it to persons who are rightly called for that purpose.--Huelsemann (Praelect. in libr. Cone) says that the power of ordaining is vested in the congregation and is given to other persons only by transmission.--Balduin (Tract. de eas. conse.)! As the keys are given by the master to the mistress of the house, thus also Christ, as the Lord of His house, which is the Church, has given the keys to His bride, which transmits them to her servants, who are called householders or stewards of the mysteries of God. (Christl. Dogmatik, III, 522, note.)

Walther: Since the congregation...has the keys immediately, therefore it is she, and it can be only she, through whom, that is, through whose choice, call and commission, the office of the ministry, which publicly administers the Office of the Keys and all priestly offices in the congregation, is transmitted (delegated) to persons who have the required ability. (Kirche und Amt, 245. Cf. 315 f.)

15.

The office of the Christian ministry is thus clearly distinguished from the spiritual priesthood and the calling or commission of all believers, as an office instituted by God, with its establishment clearly commanded and its functions fully enumerated and clearly defined.

A. Proof from Scripture.

a. We keep in mind, first of all, the Great Commission and the spiritual priesthood of all believers.

Matt. 28,19,20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Mark 16,15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

1 Pet. 2,9. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Rev. 1,6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

b. We note that Scripture speaks of special servants, in charge of specific services. Among them are named the pastors and teachers of the Church, and the apostles place such ministers on the same level with themselves.

Matt. 22,3,4. He sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared My dinner.

Matt. 24,45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made a ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season?

Luke 12,45. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.

John 21,15-17. Feed My lambs...Feed My sheep...Feed My sheep.

Eph. 4,11. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

Col. 4,7. All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.

Phil. 2,25. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger.

1 Cor. 4,1,6. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God...And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes. Chap. 1,1: Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sothener our brother.

c. We note that the Bible distinctly speaks of a special call into this office, as the ministry of the New Testament.

Rom. 10,15. How shall they preach, except they be sent?

1 Cor. 12,28,29. God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?

Heb. 5,4. No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

James 3,1. My brethren, be not many masters (literally, πολλοί διδασκαλοί, many teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

d. That the ministry of the Word is an office instituted by God appears also from the special qualifications and functions which are spoken of in Scripture, as pertaining to the incumbents of the office.

Eph. 4, 11, 12. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Acts 20, 17, 28. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church... Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

Col. 4, 17. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

1 Tim. 3, 1-7. This is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1, 5b-9. Ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers.

1 Pet. 5, 1-3. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

e. The passages of the last group clearly show that the Christian congregation and the Christian ministry are correlates, that normal conditions, in keeping with God's Word, will find every congregation with its pastor or minister.

1 Tim. 5, 17-19. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

This passage clearly presupposes the relation of congregation and pastor, for two parties are spoken of, and certain duties of the one toward the other are named.

1 Cor. 9, 14. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

Here again we are dealing with an office evidently in charge of the congregation.

Gal. 6, 6. Let him that is taught communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Also in this passage the distinction between the teacher, on the one hand, and the pupil, disciple, or catechumen, on the other hand, is plainly taught.

1 Thess. 5, 12, 13. We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

Hebr. 13, 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Formula of Concord: The ministry of the Church, the Word preached and heard. (Art. XII. Trigl., 1101.)

Smalcald Articles: Christ sends forth His disciples on an equality, without any distinction so that no one of them was to have more or less power than the other...The authority of the ministry depends upon the Word of God...The office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the apostles. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 505 f.) NB

Augsburg Confession: Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments, unless he be regularly called. (Art. XIV. Trigl., 49.)

Apology: Nor do we have another priesthood like the Levitical, as the Epistle to the Hebrews sufficiently teaches. But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament...For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry (that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by man). And it is of advantage, so far as can be done, to adorn the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical men, who dream that the Holy Ghost is given not through the Word, but because of certain preparations of their own, if they sit uncoupled and silent in obscure places, waiting for illumination. (Art. XIII. Trigl., 311.)

Apology: Therefore the bishop has the power of the order, i.e., the ministry of the Word and Sacraments; he has also the power of jurisdiction, i.e., the authority to excommunicate those guilty of

open crimes, and again to absolve them if they are converted and seek absolution. But their power is not to be tyrannical, i.e., without a fixed law; nor regal, i.e., above law; but they have a fixed command and a fixed Word of God, according to which they ought to teach, and according to which they ought to exercise their jurisdiction. (Art. XXVIII. Trigl., 447.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.*

*Compare also the material offered in the elaboration of the preceding proposition.

Luther: It is true, all Christians are priests, but not all pastors. For in addition to the fact that he is a Christian and a priest, he also must have an office and a parish entrusted to him. The call and command makes pastors and preachers. (Exposition of Ps. 82, 4. St. Louis Ed., 5, 722.)

Luther: For although they are all priests, yet for all that they can and should not all preach or teach, and rule; but certain ones must be separated from the whole multitude and called, to whom the office is committed. And he who is thus in charge, is not a priest on account of the office (as all the others are), but he is a servant of all the others. And when he can no longer preach and serve, he steps back into the common assembly, commits the office to some one else, and is no more than any ordinary Christian. Behold, thus the office of preaching or the ministry must be separated from the priesthood of all baptized Christians. For such office is no more than a public service, which is committed (delegated) to one by the whole congregation, who are all priests at the same time. (Exposition of Ps. 110, 4. 5. St. Louis Ed., 5, 1037 f.)

Luther: Therefore every Christian has the power...to retain the sins and to remit them. I hear, then, that I may hear confession, baptize, preach, administer the Sacrament? No. St. Paul says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." If every one should want to hear confession, baptize, administer the Sacrament, how would that be proper? Also, if every one should want to preach, who would want to listen? If we should all want to preach at the same time, it would result in a mixture of noises, as in a company of frogs. Therefore it should be done this way that the congregation elect one who has the ability, who then administers the Sacraments, preaches, hears confession, and baptizes. All of us, indeed, possess this power; but no one may presume to exercise it publicly except he who has been chosen for that purpose by the congregation. (Sermon on John 20, 19-31. St. Louis Ed., 11, 746.)

Hoenecke: We are here dealing of the ministry of the Word in its concrete appearance. Of this office in its concrete sense Scripture teaches that it exists by divine institution (1 Cor. 12, 28; 2 Cor. 5, 18; Jer. 3, 15; Joel 2, 23); and indeed it is said not only of God in general, but the institution of the office is predicated of the individual persons of the Godhead, of the Father (Hob. 1, 1; Gal. 1, 16), of the Son (Matt. 10, 1; Luke 9, 1; Matt. 28, 19; Mark 16, 15; Eph. 4, 11; John 20, 21; 1 Cor. 1, 17; 4, 1, 2; 2 Cor. 5, 20), of the Holy Ghost (Acts 20, 28; 1 Cor. 12, 4-6). (Ev.-Luth. Dogm., IV, 175 f.)

Note: A careful comparison of all passages concerned urges the conclusion upon us that the office of the ministry, as an office of the local congregation, is derived from the general call of the apostles, as our Confession puts it. It is God's will and command that the Gospel is to be proclaimed in the congregations, in the public exercise of the ministry, by men who have the necessary qualifications. This clearly follows from Titus 1, 5 and 2 Tim. 2, 2, for these passages do not merely contain a bit of apostolic advice, but they belong to the pastoral theology of the Lord and are binding upon the Church of all times.

16.

While the ministry is not a hierarchical division of the Church, being properly an office of service, it is the highest office in the church, from which all other congregational offices are derived.

A. Proof from Scripture.

John 13, 13-15. Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If then I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Matt. 23, 8. 10. But be not ye called rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren...Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ.

While in the Old Testament the Lord had actually established a special class of the priesthood as a hierarchy, the first-born of the people being so designated at the time of the exodus, Ex. 13, 3; 12, and their place being supplied later by Aaron and his sons, together with the whole tribe of Levi, Ex. 28 and 29; 32, 28, 29; Num. 3, especially v. 45, there is no such distinction of rank or station in the New Testament Church, for Christ alone is the Head, the Master and Lord. The claim of the pope that he is Christ's vice-regent on earth is the great lie upon which the papacy is founded. Any distinction between "clergy" and "laity" is not one of rank or station, but of office alone, and this office properly a ministry of service at that.

John 21, 15-17. Feed My lambs...Feed My sheep...Feed My sheep.

Col. 1, 24, 25. For His body's sake, which is the Church, whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God.

2 Cor. 4, 1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not. Cp. chap. 3.

1 Cor. 3, 5. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed.

Eph. 3, 7, 8. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

1 Cor. 4, 1. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

These passages clearly speak of the ministry as of a service of Christ in behalf of the church. And this fact remains true, even though the office is that of overseeing, directing, and ruling, whereby it becomes the highest office in the Church.

Acts 20, 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

1 Tim. 3, 5. If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?

1 Tim. 5, 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine.

Titus 1, 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

1 Pet. 5, 1-3. The elders among you I exhort, who am also an elder... Feed the flock which is among you, taking the oversight thereof... neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Heb. 13, 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Apology: For of all acts of worship that is the greatest, most holy, most necessary, and highest, which God has required as the highest in the First and the Second Commandment, namely, to preach the Word of God. For the ministry is the highest office in the Church. Now, as this worship is omitted, how can there be knowledge of God, the doctrine of Christ, or the Gospel? But the chief service of God is to teach the Gospel. (Art. XV. Trigl., 327.)

Apology: Liturgia, in Greek, really denotes an office in which a person ministere to the congregation. This is well applied to our teaching, because with us the priest, as a common servant of those who wish to commune, ministers to them the holy Sacrament. (Art. XXIV. Trigl., 413.)

Smalcald Articles: Therefore the Church can never be better governed and preserved than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops, equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, Sacraments, prayer, and works of love, etc., as St. Jerome writes that the priests at Alexandria together and in common governed the churches, as did also the apostles, and afterwards all bishops throughout all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all. (Part II, Art. IV. Trigl., 473 f.)

Smalcald Articles: The office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the apostles, and it is not necessary for all to have the call or confirmation of this one person, Peter alone. In 1 Cor. 5,6 Paul makes ministers equal. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 507.)

Smalcald Articles: The Gospel assigns to those who preside over churches the command to teach the Gospel, to remit sins, to administer the Sacraments, and besides jurisdiction, namely, the command to excommunicate those whose crimes are known, and again to absolve those who repent. And by the confession of all, even of the adversaries, it is clear that this power by divine right is common to all who preside over churches, whether they are called pastors, or elders, or bishops. And accordingly Jerome openly teaches in the apostolic letters that all who preside over churches are both bishops and elders, and cites from Titus 1,5 f.: For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain elders in every city (and afterwards calls these persons bishops). Then he adds: A bishop must be the husband of one wife. Likewise Peter and John call themselves elders (or priests), 1 Pet. 5,1; 2 John 1. ...Jerome teaches that it is by human authority that the grades of bishop and elder or pastor are distinct. And the subject itself declares this, because the power (the office and command) is the same, as he has said above. But one matter afterwards made a distinction between bishops and pastors, namely, ordination, because it was so arranged that one bishop should ordain ministers in a number of churches. But since by divine authority the grades of bishop and pastor are not diverse, it is manifest that ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine law. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 523.)

Formula of Concord: We believe, teach, and confess that... the entire congregation of God, yea, every Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the leaders of the congregation of God (as those whom God has appointed to rule His Church)... (Art. X, Trigl., 1035.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: It is enough now that we know that a Christian people is undivided, without any stations and persons of distinction! In which there should be no layman (as a separate station), no cleric, no monk, no nun, absolutely no difference, all of them married or unmarried, as it pleases the individual. In itself also there is no difference between bishops, elders, and priests, nothing that separates them from other Christians, except that he has a different office which is committed to him, to preach the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments, just as a mayor or judge is not different from other citizens, except that the government of the city is committed to him. Therefore the name bishop or priest is not the designation of a station, but the name of an office. A priest is as much as an elder, a bishop as much as a superintendent. Out of this the impious persons have developed stations and dignities. Otherwise Paul calls them stewards, servants of Christ, servants of God, and overseers. (Of the Abuse of the Mass. St. Louis Ed., 19, 1024 f.)

Luther: If they were not compelled to admit that as many of us as are baptized are likewise priests, as we are in truth; and that to them alone is committed the ministry, yet only with our consent, then they would, at the same time, know that they have no right to rule over us, except to the extent that we should permit it of our own free will...Therefore we are all Christians, as many of us as are Christians. But those whom we call priests are servants (ministers), who in our name are to perform all these services. And the priesthood is nothing but a service. It is written 1 Cor. 4, 1: "let a man be account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." (Of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. St. Louis Ed., 19, 113 f.)

Luther: None of us, in Holy Baptism, is born an apostle, a preacher, a teacher, or a pastor, but as priests we are all born; afterwards some of these born priests are taken and called and elected to such offices, who in behalf of us all are to perform such office. But that the fathers called their consecrated men Sacerdotes, and that this name came into general use, that we must condone, as many another thing. And if it had only remained with their consecration and ordination, the name itself would not have caused damage, for they consecrated pastors. (Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe. St. Louis Ed., 19, 1260.)

Luther: Behold, thus the office of preaching or the ministry is to be distinguished from the universal priesthood of all baptized Christians. For such office is no more than a public service, which is committed to one man by the whole congregation, who are all priests at the same time. (Exposition of Ps. 110, 4. St. Louis Ed., 5, 1038.)

Luther: Therefore he who is entrusted with the ministry is thereby entrusted with the highest office in Christendom; he may then also baptize, celebrate mass (administer Holy Communion), and perform all the duties of the pastoral office; or, if he does not choose to do so, he may stay with preaching alone and leave baptizing and other subsidiary offices to others. As Christ did and Paul and all apostles, Acts 6. (That a Christian Congregation has Right and Power, of the Year 1523. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1549.)

Luther: If the office of the Word is given to a man, then also all other offices are given to him which are exercised through the Word in the Church, as the power to baptize, to bless (that is, to administer the Holy Communion), to bind and to loose, to pray and to judge or condemn. For the office to preach the Gospel is the highest of all; for it is the true apostolic office, which lays the foundation of all other offices, to whom it pertains to build on the first; as, for instance, the offices of teachers, of prophets, of rulers, of those who have the gift of languages and that of healing, as St. Paul places them in order 1 Cor. 12, 8 f. For even Christ for the most part confined Himself to preaching the Gospel, as one who wanted to exercise the highest office, and He did not baptize (in person). Paul likewise boasted that he had not been sent to baptize, as to a lower and subsidiary office, but that he had been sent to preach the Gospel, as to the principal office. 1 Cor. 1, 17. (How Ministers Are to Be Called... St. Louis Ed., 10, 1587.)

Luther: This ruling and taking care is all to be understood of the common offices of the Christian congregation, not of worldly rulers, as heads of houses and princes, but of those who rule in the Christian congregation, as he says 1 Tim. 3, 5: 'If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?' These, then, are the ones who are to watch over all offices: that the teachers perform their work and not be tardy; that the deacons properly distribute the goods and also not be dilatory; that they discipline the sinners and excommunicate them; and thus see to it that all offices are properly administered. That is the office of the bishops, for which reason they are also called bishops, that is, overseers and antistites (as St. Paul calls them here), that is, leaders and rulers... But we all should know that there is nothing higher than God's Word, which office is above all other offices; therefore the office of ruler is its servant... The teachers and prophets shall, in turn, be subject to the ruler and follow him, and so submit themselves that all Christian works and offices be servants of the other. (On Rom. 12, 8. St. Louis Ed., 12, 338 f.)

Walther: In and with the apostolate the Lord has instituted only one office in the Church, which embraces all other offices of the Church and by which the congregation of God is to be cared for in every respect; the highest office is the office of the ministry, with which all other offices are transmitted at the same time; every other public office of the Church is therefore a part of this office or an auxiliary office, which assists the ministry. (Kirche und Amt, 342.)

17.

Although every form of induction into an ecclesiastical office is a word church form, yet a distinction is made, the term ordination being employed in the case of those trained for the full office, and called to perform its functions in the midst of a congregation, the term commission being used for such as are called for mission work in the full sense of the term, and the term installation being preferred in the case of all auxiliary offices.

Note: In the Old Testament Church there was a special form of consecration for kings, prophets, and priests. Thus Saul was anointed by Samuel, 1 Sam. 10, 1, as was David, 1 Sam. 16, 13. Aaron went through a whole process of consecration, Lev. 8, and similar rites were observed in the case of all priests who were to serve before the Lord. But in the New Testament no such elaborate form has been ordained by God, the only ceremony which we hear of being that of the laying on of hands.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Mark 3, 14. And He ordained (literally: He made, placed, or set) Twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach. Cp. Matt. 10, 1; Luke 9, 1.

Acts 1, 23, 26. And they appointed (literally, set, or placed) two, Joseph called Barsabbas, and also surnamed Justus, and Matthias... And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered (synkatabaphis) with the eleven apostles.

Under the evangelist omitted the reference to a special ordination of the Twelve, which is not likely, we must conclude that this ceremony was not necessary even in the case of these New Testament teachers of the whole church.

Acts 6, 5, 6. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

Acts 13, 2, 3. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost...

1 Tim. 4, 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery.

1 Tim. 5, 22. Lay hands suddenly on no man.

2 Tim. 1, 6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

The first two passages speak of the apostolic usage connected with the commissioning of men who have been specially called for positions in the ministry of the Church. The third and fifth passages undoubtedly refer to the ordination of Timothy, at which Paul had himself been a leading figure, in following the usage acknowledged by the various congregations. But it should be noted that we have no reason for believing in an extraordinary transmission of miraculous gifts, even in this apostolic age. The words of Barnes may well apply here: "The gift referred to here was that by which Timothy was qualified for the work of the ministry. It relates to his office and qualifications--to everything that entered into his fitness for the work. It does not refer exclusively to any influence that came upon him in virtue of his ordination, or to any new grace that was infused into him by that act, making him either officially or personally more holy than other men, or than he was before,--or to any efficacy in the mere act of ordination,--but it comprised the whole train of circumstances by which he had been qualified for the sacred office, and recognized as a minister of religion. All this was regarded as a gift, a benefit, or favor, and he was not to neglect or disregard the responsibilities and advantages growing out of it."

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, 1 Ep. 2, 9. Ye are a royal priesthood. These words pertain to the true Church, which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers since it alone has the priesthood. And this also a most common article of the Church testifies. For formerly the people elected pastors and bishops. Then came a bishop, either of that church or of a neighboring one, and confirmed the one elected by the people, and of his own authority did nothing else than such a rite. (1 Cor. 15, 22.)

The statement is here properly made that the election and call of a pastor properly constitutes his induction into the ministry, and that the ordination is merely a public acknowledgment of the call by the Church, incidentally also the declaration concerning a man's fitness for the office.

Apology: The adversaries understand priesthood not of the ministry of the Word, and administering the Sacraments to others, but they understand it as referring to sacrifice; as though in the New Testament there ought to be a priesthood like the Levitical, to sacrifice for the people, and merit the remission of sins for others. We teach that the sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross has been sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that there is no need, besides, of other sacrifices, as though this were not sufficient for our sins. Men, accordingly, are justified not because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice, if they believe that they have been redeemed by this sacrifice... But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises, Rom. 1, 16: The Gospel is a power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Likewise, Is. 55, 11: So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please. If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry... And it is of advantage, so far as can be done, to adorn the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical men, who dream that the Holy Ghost is given not through the Word, but because of certain preparations of their own, if they sit unoccupied and silent in obscure places, waiting for illumination. (Art. XIII. Trigl., 311.)

Our Church here confesses that ordination is to be considered divine, if we thereby understand the election to the ministry per synecdochen, but not in the sense which the Romanists and other sects associate with it, namely as a divine act which is intended to ratify the call, for such a ratification is nowhere demanded.

Smalcald Articles: Since by divine authority the grades of bishop and pastor are not diverse, it is manifest that ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine law (if a pastor in his own church ordains certain suitable persons to the ministry, such ordination is, according to divine law, undoubtedly effective and right)... We have spoken of ordination, which alone, as Jerome says, distinguished bishops from other elders. Therefore there is need of no discussion concerning the other duties of bishops. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 523 f.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: If there is something good in me, it is not mine, but it is the gift of my dear God and of my Savior Jesus Christ, whose gifts I may not deny. namely, that I understand the Holy Scriptures (although little) much better and know far better how to consecrate a Christian bishop than the Pope and all his adherents, who are hostile to the Holy Scripture and the Word of God, and do not know what they say or whence they affirm, 1 Tim. 1, 7, nor even what they do and neglect to do. In their own church laws teach them that a

bishop is properly consecrated, if he is ordained by one who has committed simony, or by a heretic; and still more, they regard what the rascally Pope, as Boniface VIII, Julius II, Clement VII, has done, as good, yea, even if the devil had done it in office. For it depends upon whether the church and the bishop are of one mind, and whether the church wants to hear the bishop, and whether the bishop wants to teach the church. Thus it is done. The laying on of hands in blessing confirms and testifies this, as a notary or witnesses testify to worldly things, and as a pastor, who speaks the blessing upon bride and groom, confirms or testifies that they have taken each other and have confessed it openly; whether the pastor, then, be an angel or a devil, the bride is blessed, because the office has functioned. (Example of Consecrating a True Christian Bishop, of 1542. St. Louis Ed., 17, 114.)

Luther: Although Paul commands Titus to ordain priests it does not follow that Titus did it alone, by his own power, but that he, according to the example of the apostles, installed them by the election of people, otherwise the words of Paul would be opposed to the example of the apostles. But what he (Henry VIII, against whom this treatise was written), in speaking of the laying on of hands, applies to the sacrament of ordination, even children may see that this does not pertain to the point, but that he, in his papistical way, fashions out of Scripture whatever comes into his mind first. The laying on of hands was at that time the visible communication of the Holy Spirit. (Treatise against Henry VIII of 1522. St. Louis Ed., 19, 347.)

Luther: When they (the fathers of the Church) called some one as an incumbent of the true Christian ministry and care of souls, it was their intention to decorate and paint such call before the congregation with such pomp, thereby distinguishing them from others who are not called, in order that every one might become certain and know which person was to be in charge of such office, and had the command to baptize, to preach, etc. For basically the ordination should not and cannot be (if things are done in order) more than a call or a command of the ministry or office of preaching. (Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweine. St. Louis Ed., 19, 1257 f.)

Luther: When Christ says: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained, it must be understood that not the power of him who speaks is ordained, but that of those who believe. (Sermon on John 20, 19-31. St. Louis Ed., 11, 733.)

Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon of 451: No one is to be ordained in an absolute manner, either for the office of presbyter, or that of a diaconus, or in general that of any church office, unless the person to be ordained is specially designated for the church of a city or village, or for the chapel of a martyr or for a monastery. With regard to such as are thus absolutely ordained the Holy Synod has resolved that such laying on of hands has no validity. (Quoted in Walther, Kirche und Amt, 314, note.)

Walther: Any matter concerning which the ordinance of God in the Word of God cannot be proved, cannot, without idolatry, be accepted as God's own institution; but Scripture is silent concerning a divine institution of ordination and it merely testifies that the

holy apostles used it and that, in those days, the transmission of splendid gifts was connected with the laying on of hands. According to the Word of God it is indeed beyond doubt that even now ordination, if combined with the prayer of faith based upon the special glorious promises connected with the laying on of hands, is not an empty ceremony, but is accompanied with the outpouring of heavenly gifts upon the believing ordinatus. (L.c., 289.)

Note: In keeping with the principles held by the Church on the basis of Scripture the term ordination is applied to the formal induction into office of one who has received the training for the full office and has received a call to perform its functions in the midst of a congregation, as shown above. The term commission is used in the case of such as are called into the field of missions where there are as yet no congregations, while the term induction or installation is preferred in the case of all auxiliary offices, such as that of deacon, parish school teacher, deaconess, etc., of which more will be said in the further discussion.

18.

Every Christian congregation has the right to establish auxiliary offices of the Christian ministry in its own midst, in true wisdom and according to the example and pattern of the Apostolic Church. Such offices are that of deacons and deaconesses, of assistant pastor, of parish-school teacher, of Sunday-school teachers, and others. These are auxiliary, not branch offices, and the persons holding them are assistants to the pastor, not incumbents of independent offices.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Acts 6, 1-6. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business (literally: for this need). But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose...whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

Rom. 16, 1-2. I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, which is a servant (literally: a deacon) of the church which is at Cenchrea, that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also.

1 Tim. 3, 8-13. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives (literally: women, that is female deacons, deaconesses) be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon will purchase to themselves a good degree,

and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Tim. 5, 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine.

The distinction made in this verse clearly indicates that the presbytery, the ruling elders of a congregation, contained two kinds of elders, such as labored in the Word and doctrine, the pastors or bishops of the church, and the elders who assisted in the government of the congregation.

B. Statement from the Confessions of the Church.

Although there was no special occasion, in the age of the Reformation, to discuss the auxiliary offices of the Christian congregation in the public confessions of the Church, the Augsburg Confession quotes the Nicene Canon: "Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter." (Trigl., 67 f.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: This ruling and taking care is all to be understood of the common offices of the Christian congregation, not of worldly rulers, as heads of houses and princes, but of those who rule in the Christian congregation, as he says, 1 Tim. 3, 5: If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? These, then, are the ones who are to watch over all offices: that the teachers perform their work and not be tardy; that the deacons properly distribute the goods and also not be dilatory, that they discipline the sinners and excommunicate them, and thus see to it that all offices are properly administered. That is the office of the bishops, for which reason they are also called bishops, that is overseers and antistites (as Saint Paul calls them here), that is, leaders and rulers. But we should all know that there is nothing higher than God's Word, which office is above all other offices. (Exposition of Rom. 12, 8. St. Louis Ed., 12, 338 f.)

Luther: All those who are engaged in the ministry or service of the Word are in a holy, proper, good order and station, well pleasing to God, as for example, those who preach, administer the Sacrament, are in charge of the congregation's money (deacons), vergers, and messengers or servants who serve such persons, etc. These are all holy works before God. (Confession of the Lord's Supper of 1523. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1098.)

Luther: I mean that station which has the ministry and the service of the Word and the Sacraments, which gives spirit and salvation, which one cannot obtain with any singing or pomp, as for example, the office of the ministry, teachers, preachers, readers, priests who are called chaplains, vergers, schoolmasters, and all that pertains to such offices and persons, which station the Scriptures surely praise and laud very highly. (On Sending Children to School, of 1530. St. Louis Ed., 10, 424.)

That Luther does not use the word station here of an indelible character, but of the office transmitted by the call of the congregation, appears clearly from the context.

Walther: In and with the apostolate the Lord has instituted only one office in the Church, which includes all other offices of

the Church and by which the congregation of God is to be cared for in every respect; the highest office is the office of the ministry, with which all other offices are transmitted at the same time; every other public office in the Church is therefore a part of this office or an auxiliary office, which assists the ministry, whether it be the office of elders, who do not labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5, 17), or the office of ruler in the congregation (Rom. 12, 8), or the office of deacon (the office of service in the narrower sense), or whatever other offices may in the Church be delegated to specific persons for specific administration. The offices of the school teachers, who are to teach the Word of God in their schools, of the deacons, of the vergers, of the precentors in public services, etc., are therefore all to be regarded as churchly, holy offices, which discharge one part of the church office and assist the office of preaching. (Kirche und Amt., 342 f.)

19.

In establishing such auxiliary offices in its midst, a Christian congregation merely reduces the amount of work which is in charge of the called servant of the Word (the pastor or minister); but the responsibility for all souls in the parish and for the administration of the means of grace remains with the pastor of the congregation.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Acts 20, 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

The text distinctly states the whole flock is in charge of the pastors or bishops of the congregation, all its members being included in those who are to be fed with the Word of God.

1 Tim. 3, 5. If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?

As a man, as father of the household, is responsible for all its members, so the bishop or pastor, as the father of the congregation in spiritual matters, has charge of all souls.

1 Pet. 5, 2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof...being ensamples to the flock.

Hebr. 13, 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls.

Here again the responsibility resting upon the pastors of the individual congregations is clearly stated.

Acts 6, 2-3. It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business (literally: this need, for an emergency was existing, and for the length of time that it was upon the congregation, this special help was needed).

The further history of the congregation at Jerusalem indicates that this special difficulty did not extend over a very long period

of time. At least two of the men who were elected at that time soon advanced to the position of evangelists, and it seems that the care of the poor of the congregation, after its first members were largely scattered on account of the persecution following the murder of Stephen, was again placed into the hands of the elders of the congregation. It certainly was there about the year 43 or early in 44.

Acts 11, 29.30. Then the disciples (those of the congregation at Antioch) every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

The condition of chapter 4, 34.35. was thus restored.

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: If a common treasury is to be established, one ought to know which are the offices that should be over the congregations. Bishop means an overseer of God; he is to distribute the divine and spiritual gifts, preach the Gospel, and provide the people with the Word of God; he must have servants, these are deacons; they are to serve the congregation in such a way that they keep records of the poor people, provide for their needs with the congregation's money, visit the sick, and have charge of all the goods. (Sermon on St. Stephen's Day. St. Louis Ed., 11, 2066.)

Luther: The office of deacons is an office not to read the Gospel or the Epistle, as is customary nowadays, but to distribute the gifts of the congregation to the poor, in order that the priests (pastors), relieved from the load of temporal service, might be all the freer to apply themselves to prayer and the Word of God. For with this object in mind the deacons have been placed into office, as we read Acts 6, 3. (Of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. St. Louis Ed., 19, 117 f.)

Luther: When the Gospel was first preached at Jerusalem and the number of believers was increased from day to day, then (says Luke in Acts 4, 32) all believers were one heart and one soul, and none said of his goods that they were his own, but they had everything in common. But those who had lands and houses sold them and laid the prices of the goods sold at the feet of the apostles; these men then gave to every one what he needed. When then the multitude became too great and the business too heavy, this disorder happened that some were forgotten in the distribution and the apostles were kept so busy with the distribution of alms that they could no longer attend to the preaching in the proper way. Hence, because more depended upon their preaching, they attended to this, and commissioned seven God-fearing, faithful men, who should take charge of this office and make provision, in the name of the congregation, for food and drink... The ministry of preaching is far higher and more; for thereby God does not help the body with eating and drinking for this temporal life, but he helps the soul against sin and eternal death. But after the ministry of preaching there is no higher office in the Church than this stewardship, that the goods of the church are properly and faithfully administered, in order that the poor Christians, who are not able to provide and gain their maintenance, might be given assistance, that they do not suffer want. (Sermon for St. Stephen's Day. St. Louis Ed., 13, 1058 f.)

Luther: If one is invested with the ministry of the Word, he

is thereby invested with all offices which are performed in the Church through the Word, that is, the power to baptize, to bless, to bind and to loose, and to judge or condemn. For the office to preach the Gospel is the highest of all, for it is the true apostolic office, which lays the foundation of all other offices, and it is the duty of all other offices to build up on the first: such as the offices of teachers, of prophets, of rulers, of those who have the gift of languages and of healing, as St. Paul gives them in order, 1 Cor. 12, 8 f. (How Ministers Should Be Chosen. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1592.) *

*For further testimonies see those given under the preceding proposition.

All offices which are thus created or established by a congregation are not distinct or independent offices on the same level with the ministry as such, nor are they branch offices: they are auxiliary offices only.

A. Proof from Scripture.

That the priests and the prophets of the Old Testament held offices which were directly established by God is evident from scores of passages. That the apostles likewise held office by God's selection and call, has been shown. It is just as clear, from Eph. 4, 11 and 1 Cor. 12, 28, that the offices of prophet and of missionary evangelist in the New Testament are God's order and creation.

Concerning the days subsequent to the Apostolic Period one fact is certain, namely that the office of the ministry, of preaching the Gospel in behalf of the congregation, has been ordained and established by the Lord, and that this one office is identical in object with that of the apostles, the only difference being in the matter of direct inspiration and in the scope of the work, for the work of the present-day pastor, as pastor, is confined to the congregation (or congregations) that has called him. Cp. Acts. 20, 28; 2 Cor. 5, 18; Col. 4, 17. While it is not absolutely essential for the existence and character of a Christian congregation that it always have a pastor (when in the process of organization, during a vacancy), yet it is an essential duty of every Christian congregation to establish and maintain the ministry of the Gospel in its midst, as characterized above.

But this same necessity does not exist with regard to any subsidiary or auxiliary offices. Not even with regard to the office of deacons have we any word of divine establishment of the office. This office, like all other auxiliary offices, is not essential for the work of a congregation. If a congregation, in the free exercise of its Christian liberty, and in order to carry on the work entrusted to it in a more efficient manner, institutes the office of deacons, of deaconesses, of catechets, of parish school teachers, of Sunday-school or Saturday-school or summer-school teachers, it is merely following in part the example of the Apostolic Church and in part other suggestions of Scriptures and of church history. But of whatever kind such offices may be, they are not branch offices of the Christian ministry. The responsibility for all the souls of the parish, and hence also for the work done by the persons holding the auxiliary offices, rests with the bishop or pastor of the congregation.

This explanation is in exact agreement also with Rom. 12, 6-8; 1 Cor. 12, 28; and Eph. 4, 11. Rom. 12, 6-8, translated verbally, reads as follows: "As we have gifts of grace, according to the grace which is given us, various ones: whether it be of prophecy, according to the proportion of faith; whether it be an office of service, in the service; whether it be a teacher, in the doctrine; whether it be an admonisher, in the admonition; he that imparts to others, in simplicity; he who presides, with willingness; he who exercises mercy, with a willing mind." We see at once that the apostle here does not give a particular description of the ministry and of the auxiliary offices, placing their functions on the same level, but he admonishes all Christians, as members of Christian congregations, to make use of the gifts of grace granted them by God in their station and calling. All Christians are here addressed, hearers as well as teachers, and the passage does not concern itself with an enumeration and distinction of offices.--1 Cor. 12, 28 reads, in a literal translation: "And certain ones God has indeed appointed in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miraculous powers, then gifts of grace to work healing, assistances, governments, kinds of tongues." Here the first two terms designate offices in the Apostolic Church, while the third refers to men who had charge of the ministry in the individual congregations, who had been found possessing the ability to transmit the truth committed to them to others and to apply it to individual members of the congregation in their pastoral work. The remaining expressions are abstract terms, speaking of charismata or gifts of grace as they may be exercised by all members of the congregation in the service of the Word. These are the gifts and functions which are especially prominent in the functions and the scope of present auxiliary offices in Christian congregations.--Eph. 4, 11 reads, in a verbal translation: "And He Himself (Christ) has given some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as shepherds (pastors) and teachers." Doctor Stoeckhardt writes, in his exposition of this passage: "The apostles were and are the infallible teachers of all Christendom; their doctrine is the standard for the doctrine of the Christian teachers of all times. Prophets and evangelists were special gifts of the early Church. The prophets, the term in this connection designating the New Testament prophets, received special revelations for specific purposes, which they then declaimed to the Christian assembly in exalted speech...The evangelists, to whom, for example, Philip, Acts 21, 28, belonged, proclaimed the Gospel as missionaries, preaching the apostolic word in places where the apostles themselves had not come, the call of our present-day missionaries being analagous to theirs. In the terms 'pastors and teachers' Paul describes the regular office of the Word, which has been and remained the same in all ages of the Church, the public ministry. The term 'teachers' seems to refer chiefly to the public teaching activity of the preachers (so that we are here not dealing with the office of catechetes); the other, 'pastors', to the pastoral activity, which applies the Word to the individual members of the congregation." As God, accordingly, gave to the Apostolic Church special miraculous gifts, which are not found in the same measure in the Church of to-day, so He also designated specific servants of the Word, who under the direction of the apostles offered themselves for certain offices of service, but all this in the ministry of the Church, so that they were not independent, or branch offices, but that they occupied subsidiary positions. But ministers, that is

men who combine the functions of preachers and pastors, as stewards of the mysteries of God in any one congregation, are the gift of the exalted Christ to the Church of all times.

B. Statement from the Confessions of the Church.

Augsburg Confession: For of all acts of worship that is the greatest, most holy, most necessary, and highest, which God has required as the highest in the First and the Second Commandment, namely, to preach the Word of God. For the ministry is the highest office in the Church. Now, if this worship is omitted, how can there be knowledge of God, the doctrine of Christ, or the Gospel. But the chief service of God is to teach the Gospel. (Art. XV. Trigl., 327.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: Therefore, he who is entrusted with the ministry is thereby entrusted with the highest office in Christendom; he may then also baptize, celebrate mass (administer the Holy Communion), and perform all the duties of the pastoral office; or, if he does not choose to do so, he may stay with preaching alone and leave baptizing and other subsidiary offices to others. As Christ did and Paul and all apostles, Acts 6. (That a Christian Congregation Has Right and Power, of 1525. 10, 1549.)

Luther: These, then, (the pastors) are the ones who are to watch over all offices: that the teachers perform their work and not be tardy; that the deacons properly distribute the goods and also not be dilatory; that they discipline the sinners and excommunicate them (as a matter of course, under the congregation's jurisdiction); and thus see to it that all offices are properly administered...The teachers and prophets shall, in turn, be subject to the ruler and follow him, and so submit themselves that all christian works and offices be servants of the other. (On Rom. 12, 8. St. Louis Ed., 12, 338 f.)

Luther: The ten commissioned elders shall, in the name of our parish and congregation, have power and command to call, to induct and to discharge a schoolmaster for the young boys, according to the counsel and opinion of our called pastor and of a preacher and of other men learned in the divine Scripture...Our pastors, preachers, and the ten elders are to have the constant, faithful supervision of the school office and of the government of the youth... (Constitution of the Congregation at Leissnig, of 1523. St. Louis Ed., 10, 969.)

Walther: Every other public office in the Church is therefore a part of this office or an auxiliary office, which assists the ministry, whether it be the office of elders who do not labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5, 17), or the office of ruler in the congregation (Rom. 12, 8), or the office of deacon (the office of service in a narrower sense), or whatever offices may in the Church be transmitted to specific persons for specific administration. The offices of school teachers, who are teaching the Word of God in their schools, of the deacons, of the vergers, of the precentors in public services, etc., are therefore all to be regarded as churchly, holy offices, which discharge one part of the church office.

and assist the office of preaching. (Kirche und Amt, 342 f.) *

*Further material is found in the various propositions under Section V.

Note: No auxiliary office may claim divine establishment and command, and only that of deacons and deaconesses has the apostolic example and list of qualifications. Hence, it will always be an error to emphasize an institution or an established office provided for an auxiliary purpose. We may never confuse means and ends. Assistant pastors, parish school teachers, Sunday-school teachers, pastor's secretaries, and others may make the work of the congregation more efficient and enable it to come nearer to the demands of Scripture, but the establishment of these auxiliary offices cannot, in itself, be made a matter of conscience.

VII. Of the Rights of Associations or Conferences of
Laymen, and of Pastors and Teachers.

21.

Since all Christians possess the right of mutual instruction and the duty of brotherly admonition as a part of their spiritual priesthood, they may also meet for the purpose of discussing the affairs of the kingdom of God and to edify one another in devotion-
al discussions or Bible hours, provided this is not done after the manner of the conventicles of the Pietists and the Stundists, so as to interfere with the public administration of the Gospel in any one congregation.

A. Proof from Scripture.

1 Pet. 2, 9. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Col. 3, 16.17. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

Eph. 5, 19-21. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Acts 18, 26. And he began to speak boldly in the synagog; whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, then took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Titus 2, 3.4. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness...teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

1 Cor. 11, 11; 11, 18. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren...that there are contentions among you...For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you.

James 3, 1. My brethren, be not many masters (literally: teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

1 Cor. 12, 29. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?

1 Cor. 14, 28. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

Acts 6, 4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.

This was the special function of the apostles, as public teachers of the congregation, and no one was to presume upon this office without a call.

Rom. 10, 15. How shall they preach, except they be sent?

B. Testimony from the Confessions of the Church.

Augsburg Confession: Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called. (Art. XIV. Trigl., 49.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: That the apostles at first went into a strange houses and preached, was due to the command, for they were ordained, called, and sent to preach in all places, as Christ said: Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. But since that time no one any longer has this general apostolic command, but every bishop or pastor has his definite diocese or parish, which St. Peter, 1 Pet. 5, 3 for that reason calls kleros, that is, parish, that to every one is assigned his part of the people; as St. Paul also writes to Titus; wherein no other person, or stranger, without his knowledge and permission, should dare to teach his parishioners, either secretly or openly. It is true, all Christians are priests, but they are not all pastors. For in addition to this, that he is a Christian and priest, he must also have an office and an assigned diocese. The call and command makes pastors and preachers. Just as a citizen or layman may be well learned, but for all that he is no doctor, that he may publicly lecture in the schools, or take such office upon him, unless he be duly called. Otherwise they are not to be admitted or called, even though they wanted to teach the pure Gospel, yea, even if they were angels and Gabriels from heaven. For God wants nothing done by one's own choice or devotion, but everything by command and call, in particular the office of preaching. (Exposition of Ps. 82, 4. St. Louis Ed., 5, 721 f.)

Luther: I have heard it said how these sneaks (Schleicher) side up to the workmen in harvest and preach out in the field while the work is going on. Who is so coarse that he should not notice that these are true messengers of the devil? If they were of God and upright, they would first of all apply to the pastor and deal with him, announce their call and tell what they believe, and whether he would permit them to preach in public. For the pastor occupies the pulpit, Baptism, the Sacrament, and all care of the souls is entrusted to him. Therefore it should be said: Either prove the call and the command to preach, or be absolutely silent and prohibit preaching. For it is called an office, yea, an office of preaching. But if no one may have outside and without call and command. (Letter to Bernhard von der Tannen, Von Schleichern und d. d. d. d. d. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1664 ff.)

Luther: Let me do you by my name that every household may administer the Sacrament in his house. For I may

teach at home, but therewith I am not a public preacher, unless I
 had a public call. (Letter of Warning to Lorenz Castner, of 1536.
 St. Louis Ed., 20, 1759.)

Luther (with Melancthon): It does not follow that every citi-
 zen may establish a parish in his house, for that is permitted to no
 one; in addition there is a big difference between a general or pub-
 lic gathering (assembly) and that of a household; for what a citizen
 does privately in his, that is regarded as secret. (To the Nine Men
 of Herford, of 1532. St. Louis Ed., 21a, 1741.)

Baier: Outside of public assemblies all believers may inform
 others in Christian doctrine, according to Acts 18, 26, where Aquila
 and his wife Priscilla are said to have expounded the way of the
 Lord to Apollos of Alexandria more perfectly...The apostle commends
 to the believers mutual information through conversations joined
 with prayers and hymns, Col. 3, 16. (Compendium, III, 703 f.)

Note: The passages given above, together with the exposition
 offered in the various testimonies, make it clear that all teaching
 done by Christians, important and God-pleasing as it is, must be
 confined to the home, to the circle of relatives, of intimate friends,
 and must never partake of the functions of the public ministry, as
 this has been entrusted to the Christian congregation alone. Home
 devotions should be held, home instruction should be given; relatives
 and friends may and should discuss the affairs of the kingdom of God,
 also at social gatherings. But such assemblies may never assume the
 character of meetings for public instruction, as did those of the
 Pietists in the eighteenth century and those of the Stundists to
 the present day. People may also dispense the comfort of the Word
 of God in private, as they may call on sick relatives and friends
 with words of consolation from Scriptures. But those activities
 may never assume the character of public teaching, i.e., a func-
tioning in the name of the congregation. So-called sick committees
 of ladies' aids, of young people's societies, and of other organiza-
 tions should operate only with the knowledge and under the direction
 of the called servant of the Word. If an individual or such a com-
 mittee calls upon unchurched, it will at least be a matter of wisdom
 to confer with the pastor as soon as possible. And it is clear that
 no association of laymen outside of the Christian congregation, as
 defined above in Section IV, nor any conference of pastors or (and)
 teachers, has the right to issue a call to a bishop, pastor, or
 preacher. This is a function pertaining to the Christian congrega-
 tion and, while it may be delegated to committees or boards either
 directly or by tacit consent, all Christians concerned in such office
 must at least be given the opportunity to express their dissent. Cp.
 Pieper (Christliche Dogmatik, III, 516): "Individuals and organiza-
 tions may issue a rightful call, but only when the call is delegated
 to them or at least is left to them tacito consensu by those who
 have this power originally and immediately." Those who speak pub-
 licly and in the name of all, must in some manner have the acknow-
 ledgement of all for such office, at least by having their name pre-
 sented, after nomination, for the consent or dissent of all those
 whose representatives they allege to be.

The leaders of the discussions or the essayists at such meetings, whether these be assemblies of laymen or pastors (teachers) or both, do not usurp the place of the pastor of a local congregation, but merely exercise the rights of their spiritual priesthood and the duties laid down in the Great Commission.

A. Proof from Scriptures.

a) The passages of the first group emphasize the need of every Christian's growth in knowledge, thus carrying out still farther the thought of the last proposition.

Hebr. 5, 12-14. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Chap. 6, 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.

Eph. 4, 15.15. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

It is noteworthy that this spiritual growth is connected with Christ's gift of the ministry to the Church, and that the Lord expects every Christian to leave spiritual childhood behind and to go forward to perfection. The leadership which has such growth in mind, therefore, need not in any manner interfere with the ministry of any congregation, but merely be a further evidence of the exercise of the Great Commission.

2 Pet. 3, 18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In conferences and circuit meetings the conditions for spiritual growth are often particularly favorable.

b) The passages of the second group present the Lord's will concerning the growth of men who are engaged in the ministry or any of its auxiliary offices.

1 Tim. 4, 13.15. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

2 Tim. 1, 13. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. 2, 2. The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Tim. 3, 14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of which thou hast learned them.

1 Cor. 12, 7. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

c) The passages of the third group bring out the fact that the activities of leaders in meetings of this kind must never be of a nature to usurp the place of the pastor in any local congregation. X-

1 Pet. 4, 15. Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

The word here used in the Greek, ἐπιτορlepiskopos, literally means "an overseer in a strange parish," a bishop in another field, a man who takes upon himself a supervision and control which does not belong to him.

1 Pet. 5, 2.3. Feed the flock of God which is among you... being ensamples to the flock.

The correlation between a pastor and a definite congregation, one specifically entrusted to him, is thus constantly brought out in Scripture; and the same point is brought out in the passages which bid the hearers to follow and obey those who have the rule over them, those duly called by the congregation, and thus also by the Holy Spirit, Acts. 20, 28.

B. Statement from the Confessions of the Church.

Formula of Concord: And after God through the Holy Ghost in Baptism has kindled and effected a beginning of the true knowledge of God and faith, we should pray Him without ceasing that through the same Spirit and His grace, by means of the daily exercise of reading and practising God's Word, He would preserve in us faith and His heavenly gifts, strengthen us from day to day, and keep us to the end. For unless God Himself be our schoolmaster, we can study and learn nothing that is acceptable to Him and salutary to ourselves and others. (Art. II. Trigl., 887.)*

*Compare also the testimonies in Section III.

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: How can all things be done decently and in order if every one interferes with the office of the other, which is not committed to him, and if every layman would want to rise and preach in church?...In short, St. Paul does not want to permit the mischief and wantonness that one interferes with the office of another, but every one should pay attention to his commission and call and be engaged therein, so that he may leave the call of the other unhindered and in peace...From this we see how well and diligently the sneaks (Schleichers) have looked at St. Paul's words, with which they supposed they might bring proofs for their right in all churches, that is, to attack all Christians of all Christendom, to condemn and blaspheme them, and to call themselves and to make themselves judges over the pulpits of others. These are truly called thieves and murderers, that interfere with the office of others, with mischief and might; against which St. Peter teaches 1 Ep. 4, 15: "Let none of you suffer

as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." (Letter to Eberhard von der Tannen. St. Louis Ed., 20, 1673 ff.)

Luther: All Christians have power and command to preach and proclaim God's grace and virtue, etc., and to step before God, that one may pray for the other and offer himself to God; yet, as St. Paul says, that everything be done in order, that not every one teach in the congregation and administer the Sacraments, but only those who are called by the congregation, and to whom the office is committed; the others should listen in silence. (Exposition of 1 Pet. 2, 5. St. Louis Ed., 9, 1173.)*

*Further testimonies may be consulted in Section III.

VIII. Of the Common Work of Congregations in
a City or Smaller District

25.

The individual congregation is autonomous and is the highest court or tribunal in the so-called visible Church of Christ.*

*This is not a mere repetition of propositions 9 and 10, but adds an item which is easily overlooked and at times misrepresented, particularly where a group polity or synodical polity is accepted as being in harmony with Scriptures.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Matt. 18, 17.18. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

When the local church (ekklesia) has acted in a case of church discipline, the last word has been spoken. A sister congregation or an individual Christian may make inquiries concerning the process and the findings, but there is no higher court that can set aside the verdict of the congregation.

1 Cor. 5, 4.5. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although the case was clear and the apostle was bound to uphold his condemnation of the sinner who was a member of the Corinthian congregation, he nevertheless places the case in the hands of the local church, for they were in possession of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. 2, 10. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgive anything, to whom I forgive it, for your sakes forgive I it in the person of Christ.

Here Paul again acknowledges the congregation of Corinth as the highest court. He does not insist upon laying the case before a synod or the church at large, but leaves the final determination of the case with the local congregation alone.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys, Matt. 18, 19, adds: If two or three of you shall agree on earth, etc. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 511.)

Smalcald Articles: Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the church, and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18, 20: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, etc. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of the Bishops. Trigl., 523.)

In both passages the contrast between certain individuals and the ekklesia, as well as the reference to Matthew 18, indicates that the local congregation is referred to as possessing this power, the highest power and authority in the so-called visible Church.

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: Behold, these are the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that is their office, that we may have in the church an eternal retention and remission of sins, not only at the time of Baptism, or once in life, but without ceasing, to the end; retention for the impenitent and unbelieving, remission for the penitent and believing. ...And what is more, He says in the same passage (Matt. 18, 19, 20): "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Here we hear that even two or three, assembled in the name of Christ, have power concerning all things, like St. Peter and all apostles. For the Lord Himself is there, as He also says John 14, 23. (Against the Papacy of Rome, Founded by the Devil. St. Louis Ed., 17, 1072 ff.)

Luther: If a bishop or an official wants to excommunicate some one, let him go or send to the congregation and before the pastor, where the person is to be excommunicated, and do what is right according to these words of Christ. (Treatise of the Keys, of 1530, St. Louis Ed., 19, 951.)

Luther: With regard to these public sins it is true that the power is with the congregation, or with the pastor instead of the congregation, to retain the sin of the sinner even without his consent, and it should loose him if he (properly) desires it. (Whether the Pope Have Power to Command Auricular Confession. St. Louis Ed., 19, 842.)

Walther: All the rights pertaining to an Evangelical Lutheran local congregation are included in the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which the Lord originally and immediately gave to His whole Church, and that in this manner that they belong to every congregation, to the smallest as well as to the largest, in the same measure. (Rechte Gestalt, 13.)

24.

Although the combination or association of several congregations, in one city, zone, circuit, or smaller district, for the purpose of carrying on charitable and mission endeavors, is not commanded by God, such work is nevertheless done in accordance with Biblical example and pattern.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Acts 11, 27, 28, 30. And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

This passage shows that contacts were established and maintained between the various congregations, and that one congregation

felt the responsibility for the welfare of another, also in matters of physical well-being.

1 Cor. 16, 1-3. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whosoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

2 Cor. 8, 1.2.6. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality...Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

Rom. 15, 25-27. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are.

Acts 20, 3.4. And when the Jews laid wait for him (Paul), as he was about to sail in Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

These four passages belong together. The first was written about Easter in the year 57, at Ephesus, the second in the fall of the same year from some point in Macedonia, probably Philippi, the third from Corinth during the first months of the year 58, and the fourth passage, from the Book of Acts, links up with the first, since the men listed here were undoubtedly those who were elected by their respective congregations to bring the collection which had been started by Paul, in order to help out the poor brethren in Judea, and specifically in Jerusalem. There was no compulsion, the admonition of Paul in 2 Cor. 8 and 9 being wonderfully evangelical, but the congregations were ready to cooperate in this great charitable endeavor. This is our example and model for similar charitable endeavors in a given city or district to this day. A plan to raise money for some worthy purpose may be submitted to all congregations, preferably by some one acknowledged as a leader by all, so that the work can be more efficiently carried out. It would be a matter of some difficulty to establish and maintain hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, convalescent homes, and similar institutions if cooperation of this kind is not practised.

25.

However, such an organization may not assume the rights of an individual local congregation, nor trespass upon the rights of the congregations represented.

This proposition presents a natural conclusion based upon the two preceding propositions. An organization which was at first established for the sake of convenience, in order to facilitate charitable or missionary endeavors undertaken by a number of congregations in common, may easily assume rights and prerogatives which have been

vested in the local congregation alone. The autonomous character of the Christian congregation must be observed at all times, in agreement with the ideals and the pattern of Scripture.

IX. Of the Combination of Congregations in the Form of Synods

26.

A synod, an ecclesiastical body or federation, consisting of a number of congregations of the same confession, or any similar permanent organization, is not a "church" in the sense of Scriptures, but is solely a human institution in which the individual congregations (and certain individuals as associates or advisory constituents) are members, for the purpose of performing in a more effective fashion such portions of church work as cannot be done by the average individual congregation alone with the same measure of effectiveness.

Note: The argument with regard to synodical organizations is essentially the same as that pertaining to local and more or less temporary organizations discussed in the previous section. Acts 15 is commonly quoted as a passage which offers a pattern of synodical organization. As a matter of fact the meeting there spoken of only remotely resembles a synod in the modern use of the term. The meeting held upon that memorable occasion was one of the congregation at Jerusalem, under the leadership of three or four apostles and the elders of the church, before whom appeared a number of delegates of the congregation at Antioch in Syria, who asked for advice and assistance in a matter pertaining to the policy to be pursued toward Gentile Christians. It was in no sense a representative meeting, at which delegates from the congregations of Judea, Samaria, and Phoenicia might also have been present. That the congregations of the Apostolic Age remained in constant contact with one another can be amply shown, but nowhere is there any evidence of a central or permanent organization, except as the apostles directed missionary and charitable endeavors with the consent of the congregations. One could very well conceive of a congregation that would take care of all its own charitable work, provide for all its poor, widows, and orphans, make arrangements to have its own pastor (or pastors) and others train young men for preaching and teaching positions in the church and women for such offices as they may hold, send and maintain missionaries in heathen countries, and perform all other duties enumerated in proposition 13 above. However, since the duties of this nature are clearly presented in Holy Scriptures, and since most congregations are not in a position to perform these duties in the most effective fashion if acting alone, therefore the organization of synods has been found to offer a solution to the practical problem involved. The work or the duty is enjoined by God, while the manner of carrying it out in the most effective way has been left to the wisdom of the Christians. The work of a synod, if rightly organized, represents a cooperation of love. With regard to all the internal affairs of its constituent congregations a synod is merely an advisory body. It is only with reference to the districts which constitute it, and with regard to its own officers, that synod is an administrative body. The officers of synod, as well as the officers of the districts, are under the

jurisdiction of synod, in keeping with its rules and regulations. This democratic form of church organization is much closer in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel than any hierarchy, whether this be in the rigid form of the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic, and the Anglican Church (the Methodist Episcopal Church deriving its polity almost wholly from the Church of England), or the somewhat less rigid form of the consistorial and presbyterial forms of church government. It would not be wrong, though perhaps not advisable, for the Lutheran Church in America to have bishops and other church officers of the same type jure humano, but this arrangement could not be demanded and maintained jure divino.

27.

In a synodical organization, if established and maintained in agreement with Scriptural principles, as pertaining to the universal priesthood, the special gifts of the Spirit which Christ has given to His Church and its individual members, can find their application to good advantage in a general way.

Note: In the discussion of this and the following propositions, the truths brought out in sections III and IV must constantly be kept in mind, for the entire discussion will have little value without a proper understanding of the Great Commission and the spiritual priesthood of all believers.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Eph. 4, 7, 8, 11, 12. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He took captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men...And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

This passage is taken from a paragraph which clearly shows the background of the general or invisible Church. That this is naturally the foil of the visible Church, generally speaking, is evident from the fact that the invisible Church is present in the visible bodies bearing that name, for the authority of all visible bodies, especially that of the individual congregation, is derived from the presence of the invisible Church, of the Church in the proper sense of the term, in the midst of the visible congregations. Hence the gracious gifts of the servants of Christ, named in this text, cannot be confined to an individual congregation, but must be understood of gifts of the risen Lord to the "Church-at-large," each congregation then receiving the benefit of these gifts, according to the ordinances of Scripture.

1 Cor. 12, 4-11. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of

miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh the one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

Here we have a general discussion of the various gifts of the Spirit, as they should find their application in the work, not only of the individual congregation, but of believers everywhere.

Rom. 12, 4-8. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The entire paragraph from which these verses are taken is so general in scope that, although the words of the apostle may well be applied to the individual congregation and to special gifts of grace given to its members, in particular its officers, the use of these gifts in the "Church-at-large" is fully implied, for the admonition holds wherever Christians are to be found.

1 Pet. 4, 10, 11. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Here again Scripture, without the background of any specific congregation, speaks of the application of the gifts of grace in the work of the Lord, even in wider circles, just as Peter addressed his letter to the believers of five Roman provinces. Chap. 1, 1.

Eph. 4, 3-6. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

This text clearly demands the expression of the existing unity of the spirit with respect to all believers who are really one in spirit, in confession and practise, with us. This demand is not satisfied by the observance of the spirit of unity within the home congregation alone, but has rightly been applied to bodies like synods.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: Therefore the Church can never be better governed and preserved than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops, equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, Sacraments, prayer, and works of love, etc., as St. Jerome writes that the priests at Alexandria together and in common governed the churches, as did also the apostles, and afterwards all bishops throughout all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all. (Part II, Art. IV. Trigl., 478 f.)

Smalcald Articles: Jerome adds: But that afterwards one was chosen to be placed over the rest, this was done as a remedy for schism, lest each one by attracting (a congregation here or there) to himself might rend the Church of Christ. For at Alexandria, from Mark the evangelist to the bishops Horacles and Dionysius, the elders always elected one from among themselves, and placed him in a higher station, whom they called bishop; just as an army would make a commander for itself. The deacons, moreover, may elect from among themselves one whom they know to be active, and name him arch-deacon. For with the exception of ordination, what does the bishop that the elder does not. Jerome, therefore, teaches that it is by human authority that the grades of bishop and elder or pastor are distinct. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 523.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: What a divine, wholesome thing it is to visit pastors and Christian congregations by sensible and fit persons both the Old and the New Testament show us sufficiently. For we read that St. Peter traveled about in Judea, Acts 9, 32, and St. Paul with Barnabas, Acts 15, 36, who once more passed through the cities where they had preached. And in all his epistles St. Paul shows his care for all congregations and pastors, he writes letters, he sends his disciples, he runs himself. Just as the apostles, Acts 8, 14, when they heard that Samaria had received the Word, sent Peter and John to them. And in the Old Testament we read that Samuel moved about, now being at Ramah, now at Koba, now at Gilgal, and so forth, not because he delighted in traveling, but from love and responsibility of his office, and on account of the need and necessity of the people; as also Elija and Elisha did, as we read in the books of the Kings... Which examples also the old fathers, the holy bishops, in early times observed with diligence... For from this work the bishops and archbishops originated, and in agreement with it each one was ordered to visit either many or few. For a bishop really means an overseer or visitor, and an archbishop one who is over these overseer and visitors; because each pastor is to visit, take care of, and oversee his parishioners with regard to doctrine and life; and the archbishop is to visit, take care of, and oversee such bishops with regard to their teaching... Who can tell how valuable and necessary such office is in the Christian Church? One can note it by the damage which has resulted since the time that the office was discontinued. For no doctrine and station has remained right and pure, but on the contrary terrible heretics and sects have arisen, as the institutes and monasteries are, by which the Christian Church was wholly oppressed, faith was extinguished, love was changed to quarrel and wars, the Gospel was placed in obscurity, and nothing but man's doing, teaching, and dreams ruled instead of the Gospel. (Instructions of the Visitors to the Pastors, of 1523 and 1538. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1628 ff.)

Huelsemann: It is of the greatest value and, in a manner of speaking, a moral necessity that, as we have boards of elders (presbyters) in the individual congregations for the maintenance of the congregations, thus also synods be established composed of a number of congregations, whether they belong to one or more provinces or countries, for the maintenance of such numbers of individual churches in unity of confession and in decency of morals. (Quoted in Walther, Rechte Gestalt, 214.)

Although a synod is a mere human institution, a distinction should be made between such synodical offices as merely enable the body to function as an administrative unit and such as pertain to the special gifts which Christ has given to His Church for the edification of the believers through the Word.

Note: This proposition is here inserted by way of transition from the discussion of a synod as an ecclesiastical organization as such and of its officers and their call and position. In the Apostolic Church the responsibility of one congregation for another, particularly of the mother church at Jerusalem, was shown and exercised when Peter and John were sent to Samaria as visitors, to convince themselves by direct contact that the Samaritan congregations were established in agreement with the Lord's provisions. Acts 8, 14.15. This was done without any assumption of authority, for the apostles did not encroach upon the rights of congregations, as we have seen. Thus St. Paul also, in the matter of the men who were to take care of the collection of the poor in Judea, did not simply appoint men in the various congregations concerned, but speaks of a brother who was chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, 2 Cor. 8, 18.19. Supervision and cooperation of the same kind was exercised when Paul left Titus on the island of Crete, to set in order the things that were wanting and to ordain elders in every city, Titus 1, 5, or when he sent Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, and Tychicus to Ephesus, 2 Tim. 4, 10.12. Such functions of brotherly supervision, based on mutual agreement, which were discharged by the apostles in the early Church as a part of their office, are now exercised by the congregations in and through the synodical organization. The words of Luther apply here: "This testimony (namely of the Gospel) is thus appointed by Christ Himself, that it should always go and remain in the Church; for for that purpose He has sent the Holy Ghost, and Himself called and gave the apostles and their successors, pastors, preachers, and teachers, as St. Paul says Eph. 4, 11.12.13, who should teach it diligently, so that it may sound forth everywhere and always in the world, reaching also to children's children and descendants; otherwise we should not need the pulpit and the entire external government of the Church, for every one could read it for himself in the Scripture," (Sermon for the Sunday after Easter. St. Louis Ed., 12, 535.)

29.

The priestly rights of the Christians, in agreement with the General Commission, are exercised also in the office or work of missionaries at home and in foreign countries.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Matt. 28, 19. 20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Mark 16, 15. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

1 Pet. 2, 9. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the

praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

*Compare the full discussion of the duties of the Great Commission in proposition 8 above.

Acts 13, 1-3. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers...As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

To the Great Commission and the special call which Saul or Paul had received (Acts 9, 15; 26, 17, 18), to become a missionary to the Gentiles, was here added the commission of the congregation at Antioch, the members of which thus acknowledged their responsibility with regard to the mission duty. This duty was evidently felt also by other congregations at a later date, for Paul commends the congregation of Philippi for contributing to his support, Phil. 4, 16, 18, as he continued his missionary labors in other parts of Macedonia, as well as when he was a prisoner in Rome. It is for this reason that the Church has adopted the custom of commissioning missionaries, since this public act is the Church's declaration of the fitness of the respective persons for the teaching of the Word and an acknowledgment of the responsibility which should be borne by the congregation or congregations interested in the particular mission work. It is, therefore, perfectly right and proper that Christians in established congregations look upon the missionaries in both home and foreign missions as their representatives.

*For the discussion under B and C, see propositions 8 and 13.

30.

Officers connected with the priesthood of the believers include also those which prepare persons for the regular teaching ministry of the Church, as well as those in which the gift or talent of administrative or executive ability needed for the proper correlation of cooperative work finds its application.

A. Proof from Scripture.

2 Tim. 2, 2. The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

The direction here given by the apostle does not create a hierarchical teaching profession in the Church, but it certainly takes account of the ministry as a profession, as an office whose qualifications are fixed in the Word of God and whose functions are established in a very definite manner, as was shown in propositions 14 and 15. These Biblical directions include conditions which place the responsibility for the training and sending of pastors and missionaries on all the congregations that hold the same confession of faith. Whether the actual training of the men (and women) concerned is in the hands of one congregation or of many (organized as a synod), the responsibility is not merely that of the Great Commission. That the responsibility concerns all the congregations is evident both from the fact that God has instituted the ministry as an office in the church and that the unity of the Spirit demands mutual supervision. Even if one should receive his training for the ministerial

office in private and reach a stage of knowledge which would permit him to qualify for the office, other congregations have the right in some way, usually through a committee of synod, to receive assurance as to the fitness of the candidate.

Rom. 12, 8. He that ruleth, with diligence.

1 Cor. 12, 28. God hath set some in the church...governments.

1 Cor. 14, 33.40. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace...let all things be done decently and in order.

That the deacons or elders of the Christian congregation hold an office subsidiary to that of the preaching ministry, but an auxiliary office, at that, is clear from various passages of the New Testament. See propositions 18-20. Such offices are not absolutely essential, but they serve the preaching of the Gospel in the individual congregation, they belong to the gifts of government in the congregation. If cooperative work is to be done, and if this cannot properly be correlated without such direction in the hands of men gifted with the charism of government, then the texts quoted above rightly find their application here.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: That chapters and cloisters (colleges of canons and communistic dwellings), which were formerly founded with the good intention (of our forefathers) to educate learned men and chaste (and modest) women, ought again be turned to such use, in order that pastors, preachers, and other ministers of the churches may be had, and likewise other necessary persons...(Art. III. Trigl., 471.)

Large Catechism: If we wish to have excellent and apt persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children...(Fourth Commandment. Trig., 629.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: Such promising children should be instructed, especially the children of the poor; for this purpose the revenues of endowments and monasteries were provided. But also the boys that are less promising should learn at least to understand, read, and write Latin. For we need not only learned doctors and masters in the Scriptures, but also ordinary pastors, who may teach the Gospel and the Catechism to the young and ignorant, baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, etc. If they are not capable of contending with heretics, it does not matter. For in a good building, we need both large and small timber; and in like manner we must have sextons and others to aid the minister and further the Word of God...I should like to know where in three years we are to get pastors, teachers, and sextons? If we remain idle, and if the princes in particular do not see to it that both preparatory schools and universities are properly maintained, there will be such a want of educated persons that three or four cities will have to be assigned to one pastor, and ten villages to one chaplain, if perchance the ministers can be found at all...(Sermon on the Duty of Sending Children to School. In Painter, Luther on Education, 235.238.)

Luther: Thus I also often, as it is said in the German proverb, have thrown the keys at the feet of the Lord, that is, I placed the office committed to me upon Him, for which reason many a thing turned out differently from what I had previously planned or thought. (Exposition of Gen. 27, 14. St. Louis Ed., 2, 278 f.)*

*It should be noted here that Luther time and again finds consolation and strength in the fact that he was called to his office as professor at the university by the constituted authorities and that his position was therefore a divine office, auxiliary to that of the ministry itself.

31.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper, as the Sacramentum confirmationis, is clearly a function of the local congregation, for the Word of God limits its administration by stating conditions which are under the control of the congregation and its ministry. The Eucharist is, furthermore, a meal of the most intimate fellowship of the Christians who partake of it, not only with Christ, but also with one another, likewise a testimony and a confession of the death of Christ on the part of those whose Christian conviction and confession has been examined in the name of the congregation. These attributes are closely connected with the special exercise of the Office of the Keys in the name of all, and hence should be under the direction of the local Christian congregation. The communion service of any gathering of Christians not forming a local congregation, or meetings as accredited guests of such a congregation (home, circuit meetings, conferences, synods), should take place in the midst of a Christian congregation, constituted and functioning in agreement with the Word of God.

A. Proof from Scripture.

1 Cor. 10, 17, 21. For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread...ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

1 Cor. 11, 26-32. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

All the conditions attached to the Eucharist, that of self-examination before partaking of the Lord's table, that of worthy eating and drinking, that of self-judgement, all point in the same direction, which is also emphasized by the practise of the early Christians in their house congregations, their "breaking of bread from house to house," namely that the Sacrament was never celebrated in a mere occasional meeting of believers, but always in the definite, restricted circle of the individual congregation, where both its public character as a celebration of the congregation, and its

private character, as intended for Christians who were known as such only, could be observed. The custom of having all participants at the Holy Communion register or announce with their own pastor in advance, is not an empty ceremony, but is founded in the proper appreciation of the nature of the sacred meal.*

*Exceptions to this rule may be permitted only in the case of actual emergencies, as in foreign mission fields, though it would be advisable, even there, to meet as the guests of one congregation, whose pastor would then act as the "Beichtvater" of the conference.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Apology: For among us masses are celebrated every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. (Art. XXIV. Trigl., 385 f.)

Apology: With us there is a more frequent and more conscientious use. For the people use it, but after having first been instructed and examined. For men are taught concerning the true use of the Sacrament that it was instituted for the purpose of being a seal and testimony of the free remission of sins, and that, accordingly, it ought to admonish alarmed consciences to be truly confident... (Art. XXIV. Trigl., 401.)

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: It would be much safer and more salutary that every housefather at home in his house read the Gospel. And since the common consent and usage of the whole world permits the laymen to baptize, it would be my advice that, if children were born, the housefathers themselves baptize them and thus, according to the doctrine of Christ, govern themselves and those who belong to them, even though they during their whole lifetime should not receive the Sacrament of the Altar. For the Sacrament of the Altar may be omitted without endangering salvation; but the Gospel and Holy Baptism are alone sufficient, since only faith works piety and love alone lives properly... Thus also this housefather, of whom I speak., if he should sigh and have a desire for the Sacrament of the Altar, which he neither dared nor might receive; that he still teach those who belong to him at home, and instruct them by the Word of God, until God from heaven have mercy and either loosen the captivity or otherwise send a minister, who should be fit for this work. (How Ministers Should Be Chosen. St. Louis Ed., 10, 1557 f.)

Luther: Casper Huber has written me for advice whether one might not (since the desire is so great on account of the long delay) give and receive the Sacrament in the houses, because one cannot get it publicly. Truly, I fear... that an unsatisfactory condition may result, which we do not see now, and because necessity does not demand that we undertake this, nor is there any compulsion to establish such a separate communion. Your conscience might afterwards be affected and made sorrowful on account of such procedure... But I should like, if this is possible, if there is a city or a village in the neighborhood, where the Sacrament is administered, that you receive it there. (Letter to Hans Honold in Augsburg, St. Louis Ed., 21 D, 1839.)

* See also propositions 8 and 25.

52.

A synod may suspend and exclude from synodical membership, but it does not possess the power of excommunication, the right to exclude a person or persons from the Holy Communion and from the exercise of the power of the keys. A synod is merely, so far as the local congregation is concerned, an advisory body.

A. Proof from Scripture.

Note: We arrive at the statement here given by a process of elimination. For since, as shown in propositions 13 and 23, the local Christian congregation is autonomous and the highest court in the so-called visible Church (cp. Matt. 18, 17.18; 1 Cor. 5, 2, 13; Titus 3, 10.11; John 20, 21-23), it follows that no other organization or body may usurp this power and presume to excommunicate a person. Although every Christian has the right and the duty to declare the sinfulness of an action and to state that the wilful and persistent sinner excludes himself from the grace of God, and although an occasional assembly of Christians (at a social gathering, in a church society, at a circuit meeting, conference, or synod) may make the same declarations, it is clear, from the Word of God, that the formal excommunication, the declaration that a person is to be regarded as a heathen man and a publican, is in the hands of the local Christian congregation, and there alone. A synod may suspend and exclude from synodical membership; it may even initiate proceedings which may culminate in an excommunication according to Matthew 18, but this verdict or declaration itself is a function of the local Christian congregation.

B. Statements from the Confessions of the Church.

Smalcald Articles: In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys, Matt. 18, 19, adds: If two or three of you shall agree on earth, etc. Therefore He grants the keys principally and immediately to the church, just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. (Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Trigl., 511.)

That the Confession has the individual congregation in mind, and not the Church-at-large, is evident from the reference to Matt. 18, 19, as was also shown in connection with the discussion in Section IV.

Smalcald Articles: Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the church, and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18, 20: Where two or three are gathered together in my name, etc. (Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops. Trigl., 523.)

Here also the contrast shows that the congregation, as a unit, is placed in opposition to individuals who might presume upon the use of the power of the keys.

C. Testimony of Prominent Teachers of the Church.

Luther: How shall one do then, if the keys are to be rightly used, that it be sure before God? There you have a certain text in Matt. 18, 15, where Christ Himself has set forth the office of the

keys that you cannot go wrong, if you follow that; but if you do not follow, rather choosing your own not way, then know also that you are in error and do not have the right keys...If a bishop or an official wants to excommunicate some one, let him go or send to the congregation and before the pastor where the person is to be excommunicated, and let him do what is right, according to these words of Christ. (Treatise of the Keys. St. Louis Ed., 19, 949f.)

Hesshusius: The final and highest church punishment, the excommunication from the Church, is in the hands of the congregation, as Christ testifies: If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican...A small church assembly of ten or twenty persons which rightly know Christ, has as much power in the kingdom of Christ as a congregation of many thousand people. (Quoted in Walther, Kirche und Amt, 387.)*

*Cp. Luther's entire Treatise on the Keys, of 1530, many sections of which are most pertinent here, although practically untranslatable. Cp. also L.u.W., 1909, 1 ff. See Luther, Vol. 19.

35.

A congregation that is a member of synod is bound by the law of love to bear its share of the common burden, unless there are valid reasons for not participating in some particular project. Such work is the establishment and maintenance of institutions for the training of church workers, the work of home and foreign missions, the propagation of the Word of God and of good Christian books and other literature.

Note: The proof for this part of our discussion is practically contained in proposition 13, which should by all means be consulted here. But we have additional Bible texts which ought to be studied in this connection, which set forth that a congregation, while it is autonomous and may assert its liberty, yet is bound by the law of love and the necessity of observing Christian unity. In this respect there is really no difference between a congregation which is not a member of synod and one which has been received into membership. But the latter, having acknowledged the association expected by the Word of God, may be considered as being under obligation to take the lead in fulfilling its duties.

Gal. 5, 13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Phil. 2, 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

2 Tim. 2, 2. The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Acts 11, 21, 22, 23. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Rom. 15, 25-27. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

2 Cor. 8, 18, 19. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches; and not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord.

2 Cor. 9, 1, 2. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

1 Thess. 5, 27. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Col. 4, 16. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

2 Cor. 11, 8. I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

Eph. 4, 3-6. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 Cor. 12, 7. But the manifestation of the Spirit, is given to every man to profit withal.

These passages abundantly bear out the various points of our proposition, in most instances the relation, not only of individual Christians, but of congregations to one another being brought out very clearly. In the work of the individual congregation, and the "Church at large" it is true, as it is of individual Christians, that "now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

SOLI DEO GLORIA !